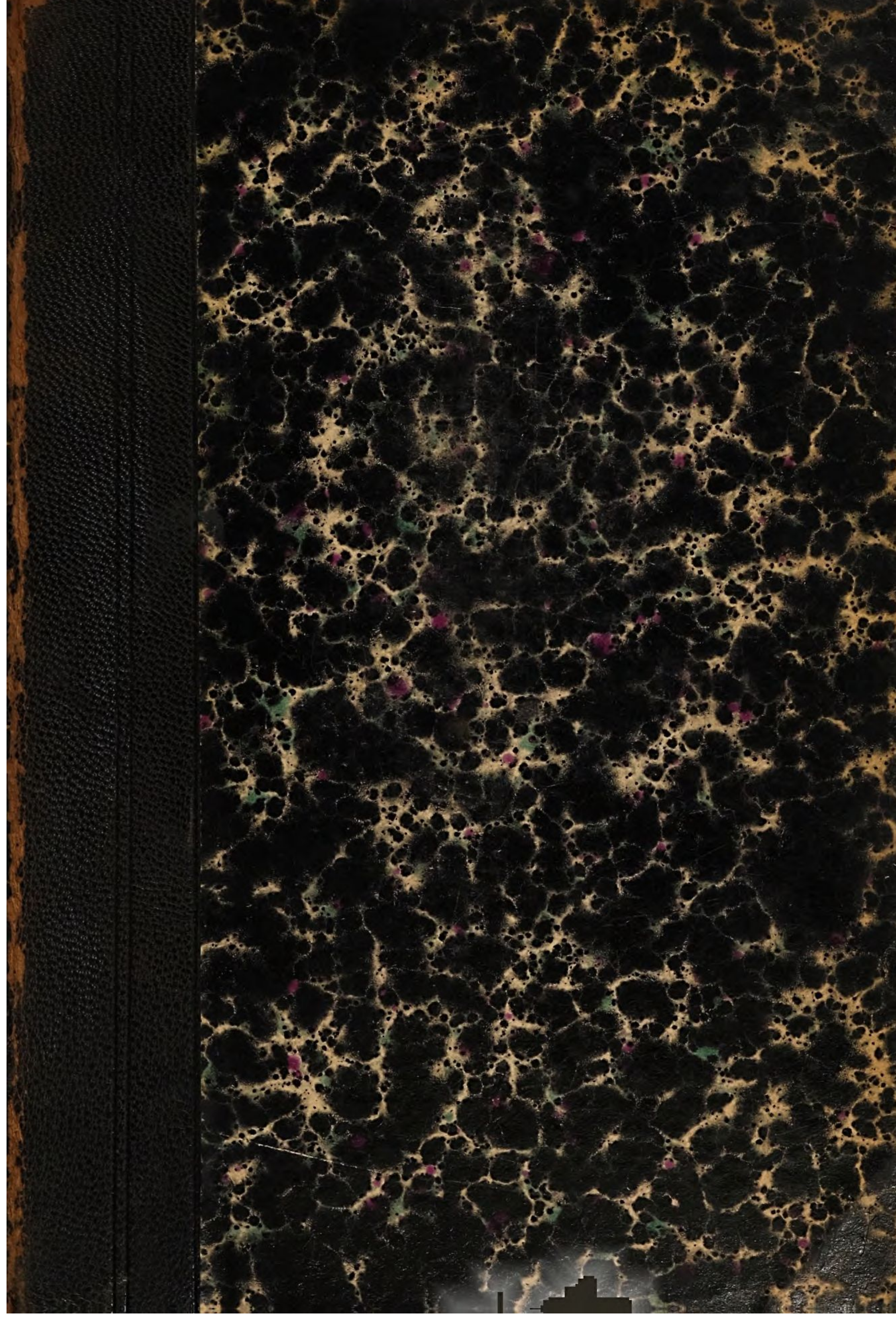




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VOL. 3021.

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IN ONE VOLUME.

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LEIPZIG
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1894.



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MY LITTLE HUSBAND.

5

MY LITTLE HUSBAND

MY LITTLE HUSBAND.

THE evening when I saw her first is much more distinct in my memory than either the one which followed or preceded it. Indeed my recollection of the period as a whole is extremely hazy. But that evening when I arrived, and was told I might go out into the enclosure, and play with her, has recurred to me often, like the fragments of a line of music of which the other bars are lost.

I suppose I must have been at the time eleven years old. I was rather a delicate child, and, for an English boy, abnormally advanced in my ideas. I do not mean that I was particularly clever, but whereas the physical development had been slow, the mind, to myself at least, gave certain compensations. I found much more pleasure

in the novels that I borrowed, or annexed, from my sisters, than in amusements of the kind which I was persistently told were far more fitting to my age. The gymnasium, I remember, I abhorred, and the recreation hours when I was expected at school to strain my limbs on the parallel and horizontal bars were so distressing to me that I frequently endeavoured, by remissness in the preparation of my lessons, to be "punished" by detention within doors.

I had gone down from Town with my Father to view some apartments which had been advertised as vacant for the ensuing months in Brighton. If they were found desirable my mother and the others were to join us the next day. For what reason it had been decided I should accompany him I cannot pretend to conjecture, but I know the rooms had pleased my father very much. We had tea together, he and I, in great contentment: and the window was open, and the sunset was reddening the square.

It is all quite plain to me, even to the re-appearance of the owner of the house—who my father said was "a lady". She led by the hand a little girl, my junior by a year or two, with soft

golden curls framing a face which seemed to me the most beautiful thing possible to conceive.

Her name, I was told, was Lilian, and presently I was strolling with her awkwardly among the trees and grass-plots to which she had given me entrance with a key she took from the table in the hall. I can recall a sentiment of envy at hearing she enjoyed the privilege of coming in here every day in the year.

What we talked to each other about Heaven only knows—which means I don't—but an indescribable melancholy, which I liked while I did not understand it, was with me when we said "good night", and I remember that when I awoke next morning my first thought was not "My mother and sisters will be here to-day," but "To-day I shall go out again with Lilian." The Square was the scene of all of our subsequent confidences. Every evening during the visit, and often in the day time, she and I would let ourselves into it with the big key off the shiny table, and wander side by side between the gravel paths and bushes while we told each other solemnly the innocent secrets of our lives. One of the bushes was very big and there was a seat

behind it: and because at this point we were hidden from the windows of the house—though, if truth be told, we had nothing to conceal—it grew to be our favourite spot, and there we would, for half-an-hour or so on each occasion, regularly ensconce ourselves.

If I ever “proposed” to her—*how* I should have proposed—I have often wondered: but it became quite a settled thing between us that when we grew up Lilian and I were to marry each other. I used to call her my “Wife” in anticipation, and she, shaking back those long golden curls, would reply tenderly, “My little Husband!”

Behind the big bush on the morning that my holiday came to an end she cried bitterly, and I—nobody will ever understand how I felt! My parents smiled at me, and when I was seated with them in the train, and Brighton was already distant, they asked me playfully if I was not sad. I answered: “Oh no, why should I be?” and looked with a knot in my throat at the flying banks and fences. I was ashamed to show them what I felt. For long afterwards a frequent dream of mine was that I was hurrying excitedly

down the hill from the Brighton station. I reached the square, and knew Lilian was inside. But I could never get the key to surprise her, and before she saw me I awoke.

* * * * *

It was more than ten years before I happened to visit Brighton again in the flesh, and I had long ceased to see it in my dreams, I had come "down" from Oxford—where I had run up more bills than a fair allowance justified, or than my people could afford to pay—I had read for the Bar—which was not a career that I had any right to choose—and I had been "called" six months, when I next chanced to stand in London-super-mare.

It was the long vacation, and though I was still waiting for my first brief it had looked to me desirable to forget the Courts and chambers awhile in the freshness of the sea.

On the night after my arrival I was persuaded to go to the theatre, and during the first *entr'acte* I remarked in the row of stalls before me a profile sufficiently lovely to make me impatient for a view of the full face.

The girl who thus attracted my attention was

with an elderly lady who was presumably her mother. The latter presently bowed to my companion, and then the girl turned, bowing to him, too. I asked him who they were a moment later.

"Mrs. and Miss Sheridan," he said. "Isn't she beautiful?"

"She was a pretty child," I answered: for the name was still familiar to me, and I knew I had been looking at Lilian grown up.

After the curtain fell he introduced me to them in the lobby, and I reminded them of our old acquaintance. Mrs. Sheridan remembered me quite well, but Lilian I saw with some vague disappointment, could only bring herself to recall me by an effort. "You do, Lily—you must!" murmured her mother. But she shook a puzzled head, with uplifted eyebrows, and a faint smile hovering on her lips. "A little," she said at last—and her cloak slipped, and she paused to settle it before a mirror.

I met them the following morning on the King's Road and Mrs. Sheridan was kind enough to ask me to call. They were still in the house in the Square, and—I am sure I do not know

why—I was glad it was so. I grew very friendly with Lilian in the next few weeks, and on occasions I was even alone with her; not in the Square any more, but in the town sometimes when I chanced to encounter her, and in saunters round the Band-stand on the pier. By degrees I realised that I had fallen in love.

I could not say if she saw it—I never confessed it to her—but I was only two-and-twenty and at two-and-twenty these things are difficult to hide. There was not the faintest gleam of coquetry in her manner towards me—in fact she treated me, I was often irritated to notice, as a boy—but I thought she saw it, because one night *à propos de bottes* she told me she was engaged.

Mrs. Sheridan had been out when I was shown in, and she and I were sitting in the dining-room. It was nearly eight o'clock. The blind was not drawn down, though the lamp had been lighted, and the sky was still quite light and luminous.

“He is on the Continent now, on business”—: she went on, speaking as if it had been the most natural thing in the world I should not

answer her—"he is away on business: when he comes back we are to be married."

My heart seemed to contract as her words fell. I had not known till then how passionate my love was! The light in the sky touched her where she sat, tinged a corner of her hair; her hands were lying loosely in her lap. I would have given my life to have fallen on my knees before her, and bowed my head there, and cried to her "Comfort me!" Did she see? She was so calm, her tone was so composed, I could not guess!

I mumbled some words of congratulation, of good wishes for her welfare, and found an excuse to take my leave. I hated the world and myself. My extravagance, my dependence on my people, wrung me as if my position were responsible for her loss,—taunted me as if demanding "And, if free, what could she be to you then?" It was getting dark, and the stars were beginning to quiver in the Heavens. I told them at my lodging I was returning to London on the morrow, and went out on the verandah, miserable, contemplative, with a white face, and a cigar

that did not taste, to listen to the moaning of the sea.

* * * * *

Many changes had occurred to me when I saw Brighton next. I had spoken a formal farewell to my youth, for one thing, and had already begun to think myself young again. I was thirty-five! A lucky accident in my profession had brought my name into some prominence, and my income was no longer to be despised. I had not married, though I had often wondered why I did not; and when, as was the case with me now, I was temporarily free to enjoy myself, there were hours when I disconsolately perceived that I had nothing to enjoy.

Lilian was in a bath-chair when I saw her, and I knew her at once. Perhaps the place of encounter had something to do with my immediate recognition—though, as I learnt presently, she had long since ceased to live here—but it is none the less a fact that she had changed surprisingly little.

She told me she had been ill, but was getting well again, and the two inquiries I framed were unfortunate, for her mother and husband had

both been dead some years. She was very graceful and sympathetic: her illness had left only a delicate pallor which harmonized, to my fancy, with the nature of our meeting. She was so good as to converse with me for several minutes, and I was conscious when I bowed, and continued my promenade, of a feeling of exhilaration.

I met her the day after, and I went later on to look at the familiar Square. The house was occupied by strangers now, but through the ground-floor window I could see the room where she had said to me, "I am engaged."

Once when we were walking together I owned to her what I had felt that evening. She said—. She was quite convalescent then, but I do not think it was health, or the breezes of the sea, which warmed her face with so divine a flush, or which lent the softness to her eyes. We have often spoken of it since; and when I reproach her, and exclaim in jest that I have served for her as Jacob served for Rachel, and more, she answers gently in the words she spoke when as children we held each other's hand behind the bush: "My little Husband!"

A MAN'S FOES ARE THOSE OF
HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD.

A MAN'S FOES ARE THOSE OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD.

THE room was the dining-room of a provincial villa. It was one of the houses where the drawing-room, swathed in brown holland, is reserved for the annual "party." Mrs. Gribble sat in an uncomfortable armchair, sewing, and Miss Gribble, in another uncomfortable armchair, opposite to her, read an improving book.

Between them, standing on the hearthrug, was Edward Gribble, a young man of eight or nine and twenty. His income of £250 per annum was derived from a position in the local bank, of which his father, now deceased, had been the manager.

The time was evening. High tea, that essentially provincial repast, consisting in the Gribble *ménage* of cold meat and gooseberry jam, was

just over, and a heavy silence reigned, in which the young man sought restlessly an excuse for going out.

Presently he lounged to the window, and remarked that it was a beautiful night. The proposition was not contested, and, adding that he "felt like a walk," he lighted a cigarette, and disappeared from view. His mother and sister exchanged meaning glances as the door closed.

"*Can* Mrs. Pickering have been right, Emily?" murmured the old lady.

"Dear Edward's behaviour is certainly suspicious," said the spinster. "This is Friday, and he has not been at home one evening this week. Oh!" she shuddered, "let us hope, let us pray, we are mistaken!"

Both women sighed, and resumed their occupations, and in the dreary hush of the philistine parlour the clock's was again the only voice.

Meanwhile Edward was walking briskly along the road which led to the theatre. The curtain was already up when he entered, and dropping into a vacant seat in the sparsely-tenanted circle, he immediately concentrated his attention upon

the stage. The object of his interest was evidently not to be found among the audience.

The piece was an old drama; the company was a stock one, and it showed no flash of talent until the next entrance of the heroine, who came on, in the approved fashion of stage heroines, forsaken in a snow-storm. The lines she had to speak were conventional and poor; she was wrapped in a tattered cloak, and, in the tiny house, the pallor of her cheeks was obviously chalk. But something in the delivery of her words, here and there a touch of pathos in a gesture, bespoke the actress, and secured her at her exit a round of applause in which Edward Gribble participated with enthusiasm.

She was very young, very pretty, and quite honest. He had been introduced to her, and they were in love. It was to applaud her from the circle, and walk with her from the stage-door to the door of her lodging that caused his frequent and objectionable absence from home. Still worse than that—they were engaged to be married, and the intelligence had yet to be broken to his people.

They discussed the necessity that night in their walk through the sleeping streets.

"An actress," said the girl mournfully, "a fifth-rate actress, and your mother and sister so strict! They will have a fit."

Edward smothered a groan. He did not relish his task himself.

"When they know you," he said, talking the nonsense that every lover believes, "they will be almost as fond of you as I am. They love me so dearly, too, that at the beginning they will be tender to you for my sake."

"Or hate me!" said Nellie Bevan. "The fonder they are of you, the less they may like *me*. Affection for a son, my dear Edward, is far from implying adoration of a daughter-in-law."

"Bosh!" said Edward.

"No," said Nellie, "it's a fact. The wife they would like you to choose——"

"If it comes to that, would they like me to marry at all?"

"Possibly not, from what you have told me of them," she continued: "but, granting that you did marry, I can imagine perfectly well the kind of girl they would be willing to welcome. She would be, first and foremost, a girl they have known all

their life—a girl who was born in Blankhampton, whose ideas were centred in Blankhampton, whose ambition was bounded by Blankhampton tea-parties, and mending your (Blankhampton-made) socks. An Artist—or a woman who, at all events, has artistic tendencies—will simply horrify them.”

“I am afraid,” said the young man, “I have exaggerated my people’s weaknesses; I have made you afraid of them. It was tactless of me.”

“Not afraid,” she answered, “not afraid of your people; but, I confess it, the least bit in the world afraid of your chances of happiness with me. They may colour your own ideas, Edward—you, yourself, may wish later that you had chosen a woman in your own class of life.”

He reproached her, and defended himself strenuously. He said she was a lady by education, and her profession was immaterial, especially since she would give it up.

“The real question, my darling, is whether you will not miss it,” he declared, “whether you will not be dull. As for *having been* an actress, that is nothing at all. You are just the same as if you had never gone upon the stage.”

"Perhaps," she said, "yes; perhaps almost the same; and I will leave it and never, never, as long as we live, ask you to let me go back. But—will your people think me the same? That is the point I am doubtful of! Won't they *look* for faults and mistakes in me?—won't they criticise me more harshly for having been an actress before I was your wife?"

They had reached the house where she lodged, and he stood arguing with her, and reassuring her, at the gate.

"Nothing can come between you and me, Nellie," he averred, "nothing upon earth. I will avow my engagement at once, and you shall be introduced to my mother this week. My love, my dear, dear love, don't worry yourself needlessly; our life together shall be as happy as the day."

She put her hand tenderly in his, and in the darkness he drew her to him, and kissed her. Her misgivings faded in his arms. She went indoors contentedly, and he decided to speak to his people the following day. On the effervescence of the impulse he was convinced that they would take it fairly well.

He fulfilled his resolution before going to the Bank next morning. He broke the intelligence at the breakfast table.

"There is something, my dear mother, my dear Emily, that I am anxious to tell you," he began, nervously. "Perhaps you are not altogether unprepared for it"—he tried to hope they were not—"you may possibly have expected that one day, in the natural order of things, I should meet a lady who—who—that I should be desirous of making some lady my wife? I am engaged to be married, mother."

Mrs. Gribble turned white, and Emily, who was in the act of taking more toast, paused with her hand extended towards the dish.

"To be married!" echoed the elder lady, breathlessly; "to be married, Edward—to whom?"

Mr. Gribble gulped, and affected a composure he was far from feeling.

"The lady I love," he said, "is not a Blankhampton girl, although she is staying in the town. She is—er—but I am sure you will be no less kind to her on that account."

"I shall always perform my duty to your wife, Edward, and so will Emily."

The spinster had removed the piece of toast to her plate, but was making no pretence of eating it. "I trust so," she said. "I certainly trust that I shall not fall short. May I ask who the lady is that we are so suddenly called upon to welcome?"

Both women already spoke in a tone of grievance, and the young man shuffled in his chair.

"She is a Miss Bevan," he said, "she is playing at the theatre; but, let me tell you at once, she is a gentlewoman like yourselves."

He got up and leant against the mantelpiece, and waited for the storm. The shiver which met his words vibrated in his back as he crossed the room. It was no less unpleasant, the ordeal, because he was independent of pecuniary assistance. His income would support his wife and himself, whatever happened, but he felt as frightened as if he could be told to leave the house and starve.

Nothing dramatic happened; there was nothing more sensational than some broken lamentations and a few gasps. Only when it was evident that

his resolution was firmly taken, and he had departed for business, leaving the women alone, were their real feelings displayed. They cried, and they sobbed, and they relieved their distress by calling the young man's prospective wife every opprobrious name that occurred to them. A flirtation with an actress, such as they had suspected, was bad enough; but to marry her—to marry her! Could social ruin be greater?—could anything more appalling, more unheard of, have occurred than for Mrs. Gribble, of Blankhampton, to be asked to receive a daughter-in-law who was an actress!

“Never,” she said, “never, Emily, shall I be able to sit peacefully in my pew from this day. What will Mrs. Pickering—what will the whole town—say when it is known? And Edward—poor boy!—what a life, what a wretched, terrible life, he is laying up for himself! That painted, designing—*hussy!*”

Now, the curious part of the matter is that, in their own way, they were very fond of Edward, and if they had been told that their attitude was not, in every respect, maternal and sisterly, the pair would have exclaimed in a duet that such

an aspersion upon them was the last straw their pain could be called upon to bear.

Something of the kind, indeed, Mrs. Gribble did say when, a few days afterwards, Edward hinted that her reception of Miss Bevan, when he brought her to the house, was not exactly cordial.

He had brought her there, and she was made welcome by two pecks upon the cheek and a cup of tea. Both women spoke to her, and tendered lukewarm congratulations. But they appeared to be on the defensive all the while, and the girl was conscious of it! Their manner seemed to say: "You have done us an enormous wrong! We are resigning ourselves to it, but an all-seeing Providence alone knows what further misfortunes we are to be called upon to suffer at your hands. Heigho!"

Nellie Bevan did not go home, after a visit to her *fiancé's* family, in a delighted frame of mind. In point of fact she locked the door, and indulged in the luxury of uncontrolled misery for quite an hour.

It was arranged that she should resign her theatrical engagement before the public an-

nouncement of her matrimonial one, and she made her farewell appearance behind the footlights a fortnight later. No open resistance to the marriage was offered by the Gribbles, and in the same attitude of meritorious resignation they attended the wedding, and pecked the bride again on the cheek in the vestry. The happy pair went to the Isle of Wight for the honeymoon, and, if Edward was rather a commonplace fellow, and Nellie only an ordinarily nice girl, neither bored the other, nor was dissatisfied.

At the end of three weeks they went back to Blankhampton, and started housekeeping in the tiniest of villas near the Gribble *ménage*. Here some little dissimilarities in their characters, accentuated by their antithetical lives, occasionally manifested themselves, but again the good temper of both overcame the difficulties, and they were contented with their new lot.

It was, as is proverbially the case, the mother-in-law who first spoilt the little provincial Eden. She could never for a moment forget what her son's wife had been, and the things she would have accepted as natural in another girl, she persistently regarded in Nellie as the trail of the

serpent. The girl's eyes, which were brown, with dark lashes, she soon decided were always "made up," and from believing it to saying so to Edward was the merest step.

Edward was unfeignedly shocked, and he told his wife point blank what had been said. Nellie denied it indignantly, and Edward was convinced she spoke the truth; but, after reporting her denial to his mother, the girl saw that a little of the doubt had been re-created in his mind. She did not get on so well with Mrs. Gribble after that, and took less pains to pretend to.

Then Mrs. Gribble declared that her manner with men was bad—too free and unrestrained. She said that "people talked about it—but, of course, she was an actress, my dear Edward, and one must make allowances." His mother was so obviously sorry for him on various counts, that Edward began rather to pity himself.

"You know," she said once, "you *were* wrong about Nellie 'making up' her eyes. I've watched her much too closely since you mentioned it for it to be possible."

Mrs. Gribble smiled, a smile that suggested

she could say much if she would, and exchanged looks with Emily.

"You don't mean to imply she does paint them?" he persisted.

"I imply nothing," she answered.

"But———?"

"But her eyes are nothing like what they used to be, if you *will* have it!" she said. "She *doesn't* darken the lashes since it was spoken of, and anybody can see the difference."

Now the lashes never had been tinted, and her eyes were in every particular exactly the same, but Edward went home and was perfectly sure he saw a change, that meant his wife had lied to him.

Mrs. Gribble, on the other hand, implicitly believed what she had said, not because there were grounds for believing it, but because she wanted to. An "actress" awoke every suspicion in her breast that human nature is capable of feeling.

The girl's figure, her complexion, her hair, everything was scrutinised and distrusted. Before he had been married six months, Edward had been told that she rouged, dyed, and padded. The

arguments he brought forward to disprove the charges were laughed to scorn, or admitted in a manner which said as eloquently as words: "Since you want me to credit it, I will pretend I do, but—*oh*, how blind you are!" Just as he had been persuaded he detected a difference that did not exist in her eyes, so he was now persuaded he remarked a difference between her colouring when he left her in the morning and the face she lifted to him when he came home at night. He developed by degrees into a spy upon his wife, a restless, uncomfortable spy. He acquired the habit of entering their room suddenly when she was there, with the idea of surprising her before the mirror, and satisfying himself definitely whether or not these things were true. He asked her abrupt questions, also with the idea of tripping her up in a series of falsehoods, and getting at the facts that way. One day when he kissed her, he rubbed his handkerchief all over her cheeks. It came away spotless, and he laughed feebly, seeking some puerile excuse for the action he had committed. It was only to be explained by his thinking she rouged, however, and his wife knew it.

This sort of thing was the beginning of it—the beginning of the end. A child might have kept them together, but they did not have a child, and they drifted apart as widely as ever married couple drifted yet. They did not quarrel desperately, but each was ill at ease in the other's company, and both realised it. The woman was the one with the courage to suggest a separation at length—Edward was always glad to remember it was so, and to declare that nothing was further from his own thoughts. She said she felt it would be better for them both if she returned to the stage, and led her own life away from home. His remonstrances were not very ardent, for by that time he had been made almost as miserable as she. She packed her portmanteau with necessities, and in the little sitting-room that they had arranged so joyously when they furnished the villa, he kissed her on the forehead and wished her luck, as the servant came back with the cab. People always speak of him as a very unfortunate young man who married an actress and was deserted by her. Although it may detract from the moral, neither he nor Nellie are unhappy away from each other; but it is worthy of note that if

he had had no relatives to "take an interest in him," and had been let alone, he would never have repented his choice. It may detract from the moral still more when it is added that his people have not the faintest perception of their responsibility, and pronounce the division "a thing that might have been foreseen." By the laws of poetical justice, Mrs. and Miss Gribble should be haunted by remorse; as a matter of fact, they are perfectly complaisant, and feel convinced that their affection, which, from the time his wife left him, they restored to him in full, is the outcome of two magnanimous natures. The gods still withhold the gift that would show us ourselves as others see us, and perhaps the gods are wise.

THE
WORST WOMAN IN LONDON.

THE WORST WOMAN IN LONDON.

WHEN Teddy Cunninghame had been at the Bar long enough to find out that it had not been waiting for him, he drifted, as hundreds have drifted before and since, towards literature. To be sure, he had always had a literary bent. He had written blood-curdling narratives as a boy, and contributed to the school magazine at college, but he had never contemplated authorship as a profession and when he at length discovered that he was actually making a hundred a year or so by his pen, nobody, in the vernacular of the billiard-room, was so astonished as the striker.

Mr. Cunninghame, senior, was astonished too, albeit he had his doubts about the respectability of the vocation. A worthy person, who had gleaned a bulky fortune out of hops, he had de-

signed his son for the Bar, more to "make him a gentleman" than for any other reason; and for a member of the Inner Temple to turn into a scribbler seemed to him a social retrogression. If Teddy proposed to sling ink for a living, why need he ever have been called, demanded the old man mentally. However, he bore his disappointment, even when Teddy began to call himself a writing-man, and dropped allusions to legal status altogether. He allowed the literary free-lance the same income that he had accorded to the penniless barrister, and upon occasions went the length of reading one of the stories signed "E.C." in a periodical. Hitherto he had only read the newspaper.

So time went on, and by-and-bye Teddy began to find he was earning a hundred-and-fifty a year; and it was at this period, when he was "doing the dramatic notices" for the *Society Mirror*, that he committed what his father designated "the crowning folly of his mistaken career." He married Jessie Pemberton, a pretty little actress fulfilling her first London engagement. And in the Cunninghame household there were thunderstorms.

He married her at a registry office, in the teeth of parental remonstrances, and in spite of parental threats. He accepted the fact that thenceforward he would be wholly dependent on his own exertions, and he removed from rooms in Victoria Street to furnished apartments in Bloomsbury, where Jessie, who was as good a little girl as ever earned her own living, toasted the muffins for tea, and Teddy "gave up the *Times* and took in the *Telegraph*." It was idyllic, and jolly, and Bohemian all at once—to begin with. Teddy applauded his wisdom.

Jessie insisted that their position did not justify her relinquishing the stage, and Teddy, who would have liked her to do so, perforce agreed. After the performance he used to meet her at the stage door, just as he had done during the courtship, and then he would take her home to a cosy little supper, and, over his subsequent pipe, they would weave pictures in the tobacco clouds of the time when he should be a famous novelist, and they would have a flat in South Kensington, all black oak and blue china, and his income would be something impossible in four figures.

After the child was born it wasn't quite so idyllic and jolly, but there is no rose without a thorn, and comparatively few married couples without a baby; and, though Jessie had been unable to act anywhere for some time, Teddy himself laboured all the harder to make up for it.

He was occupied with his first book; he had been occupied upon it for months. In the intervals of copy for the *Society Mirror*, and short stories for any papers that chose to accept them, he was putting his best work, all the wit and fancy he was possessed of, into a novel of modern life. His days were sufficiently full apart from it, but he often wrote half through the night, when the baby had left off crying, and all the house slept.

As the book progressed, it had become more and more a wrench to put it aside for the necessary pot-boiling. Each morning he would look at the newest sheets of the growing manuscript longingly, and then thrust them back with a slam into the drawer, cutting himself off from the temptation to continue it before turning to his daily routine. Then, while he worked on the stuff he had begun to hate and despise, Jessie would read the last in-

stalment of the *magnum opus*, and silently pencil upon the backs of old letters any suggestions that occurred to her. She was a little trump, was Jessie, and the son and heir never made more noise than a pretty wife with a big heart could prevent the while that Teddy wrote away at the rickety table before the window which let a draught in. She was a trump and a critic too, for her suggestions besides being affectionate, were valuable, and later on she surpassed herself in a third capacity—she shone as a literary agent. This, however, is anticipating, and she was very far from suspecting her talent in this direction herself at that stage.

The baby was four months old when the novel was finished, and they celebrated its conclusion by a supper more elaborate than was their wont, after the baby had “gone by-bye.” What to call it was a momentous question, but the evolution of the heroine’s character lent itself to a title which both Teddy and Jessie thought particularly striking. They decided on “The Worst Woman in London,” and Teddy wrote it in a big hand on the top of the first page. Brown paper and string were brought out forthwith, and the manu-

script packed up, and addressed before they went to bed.

"Wish it luck, Jessie," said Teddy, handling it fondly; and Jessie uttered a little benediction, and the following morning "The Worst Woman in London" started on its adventures.

Six weeks went by before they heard anything of it, and then it returned to Bloomsbury with a note regretting that "in view of the present depressed condition of the book-market, the publishers could not see their way to availing themselves of Mr. Cunninghame's kind offer." Teddy, who had hoped, despite an affectation of pessimism, pitched the note in the fire, and smothered strong language.

"Never mind," said Jessie, "we'll send it somewhere else. You know you said there were several firms, one as good as the other. Write a line at once, and we'll pack it off again."

And again they were hopeful, and again, after several weeks, the manuscript came back. The first disappointment, indeed, proved to be the forerunner of many. Some of the publishers retained it longer than others—so long, occasionally, that Jessie was ready to vow it was now accepted

—but always and without fail the wretchedly familiar parcel turned up at last, with the hackneyed note expressing ironical regrets. Until one morning—one morning dated in red letters on the minds of both!

Jessie had gone into breakfast first, and lying on the table was an envelope, at the sight of which she uttered a cry.

“Teddy!” she called.

“Hullo!” shouted Teddy. “What’s up?”

“There an answer from Regent and Row’s about the book, and Teddy——”

“Well?” Teddy’s tone through the door was growing as excited as her own.

“The book hasn’t come back!”

“Oh!” said Teddy, “it’s coming. Don’t be uneasy, darling, it’s coming; it will be delivered safe and sound by the next post.” But he put in an appearance, and caught up the letters with fingers that trembled a little. And then he uttered an exclamation. Messrs. Regent and Row wrote that with regard to his manuscript, “The Worst Woman in London,” they would be glad if Mr. Cunninghame would call upon them any day that week between the hours of eleven and one. The

tide had turned. Teddy and Jessie gazed at each other with pale faces.

"I shall go to-day, immediately—or would you wait a day or two?"

"Oh, go now—or no, perhaps it would be wiser to wait. But I am *so* anxious to know what they say!"

They shook each other's hand, and kissed each other, and capered about the room with delight. It was decided that the author should learn his fate without delay, and after breakfast, having put on his best coat, and brushed his silk hat before the fire, he prepared to depart.

He already debated how little he should consent to accept, and rehearsed an imaginary interview, in which the publisher was imploring, and himself a courteous adamant.

On reaching the office he inquired of a clerk whether Mr. Regent or Mr. Row was in, and was pleased to detect a difference in that worthy's bearing on the presentation of his card.

"Will you kindly sit down, sir?" said the clerk, "Mr. Regent will be disengaged in a few minutes."

Teddy kindly sat down, and a few moments later was ushered into an inner room, where a bald and benign gentleman gave him greeting.

The gentleman informed him that the reader's report upon "The Worst Woman in London" had been distinctly favourable—so favourable, in fact, that in spite of its author being unknown, the firm was prepared to publish it.

"You have originality," he said, "epigram, and style—that invaluable quality which we term 'style.' The report is—is really most favourable," It lay upon the table before him, and he laid his hand on it and turned its leaves.

"It seems a very long one, certainly," said Teddy. "Does your reader usually send them in to you that length?"

"No," replied the great man; "it is exceptional, and I may say that it has aroused my interest so much that I am going to dip into the manuscript myself."

"This is very flattering," said Teddy, "and—er—as regards terms?"

"As regards terms," said the publisher, deliberately, "we propose to pay fifty pounds."

Teddy leant back in his chair and tried to disguise his uneasiness.

"Oh, no," he said, "I couldn't, really. The book took me the best part of a year to write."

"And if it hadn't," observed Mr. Regent, "it would not have possessed the merits it does. The slop-made article, my dear sir, is of as little value in literature as in any other trade."

"That may be," said Teddy, "but if the well-made article won't sell for more than fifty pounds, one had better not make it at all."

"Name, my dear sir," said Mr. Regent, tapping his fingers together, "all a matter of name. I do not deny that if the public were looking for a book from you, a MS. of yours would be worth twenty times the amount to me, even though it were not a tenth part as good."

"You encourage me very much," replied Teddy, drily; "but I am a journalist, and I know what you say is true. The point of this matter, however, is that rather than take less than a hundred, and a royalty after the first edition, I would keep the MS. in my desk."

"You see," said Mr. Regent, "it will not set up into more than two volumes, or perhaps we

might have—er—well, we might have met your views.”

“I beg your pardon,” said Teddy, “it is—at least it was—designed for a three-volume book. Are you positive that it isn’t long enough?”

“So I have understood; yes. However, I will see—I will see, Mr. Cunninghame.”

“And supposing it will set up into three, I may take it that your offer will be what I require?”

“I will see what we can do; I must consult my partner. Good day to you, sir; good day.”

He shook hands with Teddy impressively, and the young man hurried out into the street with a swelling heart. Whatever may be the terms offered, the prospect of seeing one’s first book in print has a fascination which few men (and no women) are strong enough to resist. Teddy leapt on to the ’bus in an excitement he did not attempt to conceal from himself, and, reaching home, endeavoured to recite the interview to Jessie *verbatim*.

For the next day or two his dread was that Mr. Regent would write that the offer of fifty pounds could not be increased, but when a line arrived stating that it was found that the manu-

script would make three volumes, and that the suggested price was now a hundred and a royalty of five per cent. after the sale of the first edition, the author was filled with a new misgiving. "After all, what did it amount to?" he asked. Nobody would hear of his book when it did come out. A hundred pounds was certainly a hundred pounds, but as for any royalty, pooh! He didn't suppose that half the first edition would be sold, much less that the book would go into two or three. "A name!" he said, savagely, quoting Mr. Regent. "My dear young lady, it is all a matter of name!"

"Well, make a name," said Jessie; "get talked about, and then work 'pars' in all the papers that you are bringing out a novel."

"Pooh!" said Teddy; and he lit a pipe, and smoked furiously, debating if by any conceivable chance he *could* get up a commotion about his book before it appeared.

Messrs. Regent and Row's cheque, despite his scornful allusions to it, was very useful to him, however. He had never received a penny from his father since the day of his marriage, and at this period his exchequer had dropped lower than

usual. Jessie and he went together to the bank, and made each other little presents, and talked more than ever on the one engrossing subject—the novel and its probable reception.

“As to the Press,” said Teddy, “I’m not so doubtful of them. They’re a straightforward lot on the whole, and if they see good stuff they know it, and say so. But the public!—the public who’ll turn the book over on Mudie’s counter, and say, ‘Edward Cunninghame—who’s Edward Cunninghame? Oh, no! Haven’t you the last of Mrs. So-and-so’s?’ It’s the wooden, immovable public that daunts me.”

It was about a week after Messrs. Regent and Row’s definite acceptance that Jessie, who had gone out to Harrow to see a married acquaintance of hers, came back to the Bloomsbury lodging with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes. In her hand she carried reverently a mysterious parcel, and when Teddy, in obedience to her mandate, untied it, he saw, to his astonishment, that it contained the familiar manuscript of his novel.

“Jessie! How did you get it?” he gasped.

“Found it!” said Jessie, defiantly.

“Found it?” he echoed.

"Ted, there was a benign, bald-headed old gentleman in the train going down reading it. I recognised it the moment I saw it. He had a bag with him, with initials on it—'W. R.' Do you think it was Mr. Regent?"

"I daresay," said Ted. "Regent lives out Harrow way, I believe. Well?"

"Well, when we stopped at one of the stations he was asleep."

"Over my novel?"

"He had put the novel aside, and composed himself to sleep. Well, he only sprang up as the train was starting. He seized his bag and his umbrella, and leapt out: I thought he would break his elderly neck."

"And left the MS. behind?"

"Yes, he left the MS. behind, and here it is. Ted—you dear old duck of a Ted—it is the most bewildering, heavenly piece of luck that could have happened to us!"

"Luck?"

"Goose! Stupendous luck! Listen——"

She spoke volubly, excitedly, for ten minutes, and when she finished, and stopped with a little gasp, Teddy held his breath and stared at her.

"Jess!" he exclaimed.

"Do you place yourself in my hands?" she asked.

"Dear hands," said Ted: "unreservedly!" And then he lit another pipe, and grinned.

It was about three days afterwards that a reward of five hundred pounds was first offered in all the newspapers for the MS. of a novel left in a second-class compartment between Euston and Harrow, and rather oddly entitled "The Worst Woman in London." The finder was requested to communicate with Messrs. Regent and Row. The amount of the reward, the title, and the publisher's well-known name provoked some comment.

Apparently the lucky individual who could so easily become possessed of a substantial sum of money failed to remark the notices in the agony columns, for a week later handbills were issued repeating the offer. The town was flooded with them, and "£500" and "The Worst Woman in London" seemed to confront the public in thick black letters from every shop-window they passed.

Little pars in reference to the matter crept into some of the papers. "A novel of modern

life had been submitted by a well-known journalist to Messrs. Regent and Row, and most unfortunately left in a train by Mr. Regent himself, who was so interested by his casual perusal of the work, that he was taking it with him to his private house to read attentively at his leisure." A few novel-readers were reported to declare that in view of the rubbish published, it was a pity that an interesting manuscript should not have been taken better care of. One irascible person, who signed herself "Cynicus," wrote a sarcastic letter to that effect to an evening paper, and danced when she saw it in print. Her name was Jessie.

The excitement dropped after a while, but was revived with a big boom. The manuscript turned up. It appeared that in the compartment in which it was left there was only one other passenger, who, idly enough, began to read it. He grew so engrossed by it, however, that on reaching Liverpool, to catch his steamer for New York, he could not persuade himself to post it back to the address written on the outside leaf until he had finished the last chapter. He committed an action for which he now greatly

blamed himself: he took the manuscript aboard with him, and read it on the voyage.

On landing at New York he fully intended that his first duty should be to mail the package back to England. But man proposes, and the Fates dispose. A cablegram was waiting for him which altered the whole fabric of his plans, and drove the unhappy manuscript out of his head. It became absolutely imperative that he should travel through to San Francisco, and then make arrangements for reaching an inland town of China with the least possible delay. It was not until he had been three days aboard the train to "Frisco" that "The Worst Woman in London" recurred to him, and before he had arrived it was forgotten again.

Once more at sea, he remembered it, and reproached himself constantly, but almost his first experience on touching Chinese soil was the loss of a portmanteau in which the manuscript lay. His search for this portmanteau, and frantic endeavours to recover it from blandly-lying natives, formed material for some humorous journalese. "The Adventures of a Manuscript" supplied the London evening papers with good

copy, and more than one of the "dailies" gave a leader to the subject.

When at length the book appeared, "The Worst Woman in London," by Edward Cunningham, was as familiar a name to the reading public as "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and the demand for it was proportionate. The first edition was sold out in a week, and then began the second, in the sale of which Teddy had a pecuniary interest. The reviewers praised it, and the public had heard about it. The second edition ran into a third, and the third into a fourth. Half-a-dozen editions went off in the first six months. Mr. Cunningham, senior, proud of his son's celebrity, even in his anger against him held out the olive branch, and in their interview Teddy told him the true and unvarnished history of his book's adventures. The gist of his recital may be gathered from Mr. Cunningham's reply.

The old gentleman stared, indulged in a long whistle, and then fell into a convulsion of chuckles.

"You've got a clever wife, Ted, my lad," he gasped, mopping his brow; "a most remarkably clever wife. I'd like to know her. I thought

you'd married an actress; but a business woman, Ted, a business woman with a head like hers—she'll be the saving of you, 'pon my soul!"

They shook hands cordially, and Jessie and the baby were called in from the bedroom to be introduced.

the very first day of the year
I sent a letter to my dear friends
and a business letter to the
shop in the evening of the 1st of
the month. I have been very
the day was called in the morning to be
introduced.

IN MEMORIAM.

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM.

It can do her no good, but I wish to tell the story. Six months ago I could not have told it, but since she died, and I came across the paper in her desk, I have been at pains to collect the facts. I understand her now—now that it is too late for anything but self-reproach—far better than I understood her while she lived beside me. I stood at her grave yesterday, and recalled a hundred things that had no significance to me at the time. I remember how patient she was, how loving; I know now that she must have suffered very much, and that I was not a good husband to her, though I meant no harm.

She was never beautiful—indeed, the first evening I saw her I thought her plain. But she was not plain, her face was too earnest; there

was too much sympathy in the tender eyes for that. Our hostess introduced me: "Mr. Weguelin—Miss Smith," and she murmured in a girlish, bashful kind of way how much she admired my work.

I had recently published my third novel, but my income from my books was not large, and I was glad to supplement it by reviewing for one of the literary "weeklies." I regarded Miss Smith with a vague curiosity, due to the fact that I knew her to be very rich. I acknowledge this and no more. It never entered my head to pay attentions to her; I had absolutely no thought at that time of ever meeting her again. I looked at her with precisely the same feeling that I should have looked at a young man possessing a hundred thousand pounds—a little curiously, a little wonderingly. I thought: "What a delightful position, and how much better I should know how to enjoy it than you do!"

It fell to me to take her down to dinner—I was not impressed by her intelligence. She spoke slowly, laboriously, nor did she seem to me to have the ideas that might be expected in a woman of thirty. With nothing particular to say, and a

commonplace manner of saying it, there was, on first acquaintance, little attractive about Miss Smith.

Later in the evening my hostess said to me:

"You have made a conquest, I see."

"I?"

"Oh yes—Miss Smith. And you pretend you don't know. Well, you might do a great deal worse for yourself, I can tell you. Come in to tea on Thursday; it's my 'day,' and she'll be here."

Until that moment I solemnly affirm that it had never even occurred to me that the heiress was marriageable; but now that the idea had been put into my head, since it was even suggested that I myself might marry her, my mind committed a thousand absurdities. I strolled home through the summer night, imagining myself, for pastime, the husband of a woman with a hundred thousand pounds. I decided how we would live, and where. I furnished my study, and determined the livery of our footmen. It appeared to me a much more inexhaustible sum than it was, and, as a matter of fact, a tithe of

the expenditure I mentally indulged in before I reached my lodgings would have dissipated it entirely. It was a purely visionary pursuit, and, during the next few days I did not recur to it. Nevertheless, on Thursday, I presented myself at the house again, according to my friend's suggestion.

Miss Smith was in a chair by the window, and, after a few minutes, I took a seat beside her. She was with her mother, a simple-minded old soul, who appeared as much awed by the acquaintance of a literary man as was the daughter herself. Before they took their leave, I had received an invitation to dine with them, and, three months later, I had proposed to Miss Smith, and been accepted.

How her face flushed when I told her I loved her—how her eyes shone! But the same diffidence of speech, always the same clumsiness of expression. “I shall never feel that I am worthy of you,” she stammered, painfully; “I cannot think what you have seen in me to make you care for me. I am always afraid—I mean I always used to be afraid—I must seem so slow and awkward to you. Oh, Arnold!”—my name

is Arnold—"I shall be so proud of my husband—so proud!"

Do I seem heartless in dwelling on the defects of a woman with a nature like this? I am recording just what I thought and felt—concealing nothing.

We were married, and established ourselves in Kensington. If our residence fell short, in point of magnificence, of my earlier castle in the air, it was something to elate me all the same. My work-room was as much Caroline's pleasure as my own; it seemed that she could not lavish money enough upon it. Every day she had some new idea, some further convenience to suggest for its improvement.

"This is where your muse will pay her visits," she said, fondly; "you must make her comfortable."

The double windows looked over the park, and, surrounded by such luxury as it occasionally startled me to realise, I commenced my fourth book.

It was at this stage that I began to perceive, to the fullest extent, how deplorably little my wife and I had in common. When I write I must

talk, and, if I do not exactly depend upon my listener's advice, it is at all events essential that the listening should be done intelligently. Alas, the girl who had "so admired" my books had almost nothing to offer in the shape of appreciative criticism. "Yes" and "no,"—"Do you think so, dear? Oh, I think so, too." It was a shock to me.

I took into the drawing-room, one evening, some of my latest chapters. She was so anxious to be *au courant* with my work, that I thought it would please her if I read her some of it.

They were chapters with which I was satisfied, and I am an exacting critic—too exacting some of the minor lights of my profession have averred, smarting under the sting of my reviewing pen. I read them carefully—dramatically, where dramatic force was called for—and at length I laid the last page down on my knees, and waited for Caroline to speak.

"Oh, yes," she said; "yes, dear."

"Yes, what?" I exclaimed, a shade irritably. "Do you mean you approve?"

"Oh, 'approve'" she murmured; "it is very, very good."

“But”——

“I cannot criticise it,” she said. “I am not a critic, and I know you find me very trying.”

I repressed impatience, and strove (inadequately, ineffectually, but still strove) to encourage her.

“Do the opinions the woman gives forth seem natural to you, under the circumstances?” I asked. “They are audacious, unconventional, and her environment has been of the most prosaic; only the situation can excuse such doctrines from such a speaker. Do you find them natural?”

“I thought they were very clever, very brilliant,” answered Caroline, slowly finding her words. “I did not question whether they were natural—or if I did——”

“You did, or you didn’t, my dear! Now which was it?”

“I didn’t,” said Caroline, a flush overspreading her pale cheeks, “I didn’t.”

In recalling the incident, I am of the opinion that she did, and considered them misplaced, but at the time the reflection did not occur to me.

“You are right, then, in saying you are no critic,” I replied, coldly, “for you fail in the

fundamental principle of criticism. Characterisation is everything; nothing else matters."

"Not the story?" she questioned.

"The 'story'!" I laughed. "No, my dear, the story is a detail; merely the peg on which to hang your ideas. But there, little woman, don't let us discuss literature, let us talk of something that interests you. Has your costume come home from Berthe's?"

It was the cruellest thing I could have said, and I saw that her eyes filled; but I had been irritated, and was in no mood to pick and choose my concluding phrase. I had really forced myself to regard her as companionable for the nonce; with the best of intentions I had sought her out almost as if she had been a colleague. For reward, the gulf between us had been displayed to me more visibly than ever. Almost I was sorry I had married. "Churlish, ungrateful?" Very possibly. As I have said before, this is no defence of myself; in penning a brief tribute to the real woman, I must also unveil the real man.

I was almost sorry I had married, and, in the two or three years that followed, I often told myself I was quite so. One gets used to nothing

more quickly than to luxury, and the things which at first mollified my soreness, were soon quite powerless as palliatives. Though I joined one or two clubs, and found companions elsewhere, I could never wholly overcome the sense of grievance that I had none in my own house. In conversing with Caroline I ceased to speak of my work altogether, and for any reference that was made to my profession by me to her, I might have been a barrister or a blacksmith.

If I was scarcely a happy husband, however, I know now that Caroline was a miserable wife. Her interest in my work was omnipresent, all-absorbing. She never blamed me, and she blamed herself. She felt—Heaven forgive me!—that she was unworthy of the honour which marriage with me had conferred upon her. Her one ambition was to make herself more fitting for the confidences that I withheld—to prove herself, poor woman, less of a fool than I considered her to be. Though she expressed herself in speaking so laboriously, the defect was due more to nervousness than to any other cause; and her comparative facility in letter-writing, coupled with the intensity of her desire to gratify me, was respons-

ible for a project that I was far from suspecting.

God knows when the plan entered her brain, but she conceived the idea of attempting a novel. The notion was food and joy to her. She would write a novel, and it would be accepted, and praised, and popular. She would write a novel, and send it to some publishers, anonymously; and when the title was in everybody's mouth, when all London was talking of it, she would say to me (me to whom she had given everything), "Darling, the writer is I, your wife!" Poor Caroline, when I stood at your grave yesterday, I pictured you driving your pen through those weary months, sustained by your secret hope!

It was my custom to closet myself in my study soon after breakfast, and to remain there until dusk. For luncheon—a glass of sherry and a sandwich, brought to me while I wrote. The entire day was at her disposal; I never interrupted her; I never had the faintest inkling of her pursuit. From early spring until the following January, from morning until dinner, when I joined her, my wife laboured at this task of hers.

Page after page—slowly, indomitably—chapter after chapter grew under her tired hand. It was a labour of love; and, weary and wretched as she must have been at times, her resolution never gave way. I have seen letters from her to her mother, in which mention is made of it—little pathetic allusions, and enjoinders to silence. “Arnold will be so surprised, will he not? But mind, not a whisper! He must hear it from me first. How he will stare—I can see his face!” (My wife! And I can see yours through the coffin-lid, and clods.)

It was in January that she wrote “The End,” and the MS. went to many firms before it secured acceptance. She was determined it should stand or fall by its merits, and would have nothing to do with publishing the volume at her own expense. This rich woman, with her carriages, her servants, her splendid house, endured precisely the same experiences as the poorest literary tyro who ever tramped Fleet Street, despairing. Hungry to see her work in print—eager, passionately eager, for the moment when the verdict on it should be given—she yet persistently declined the temptation to accelerate the moment by any

adventitious aid! "On its merits"—she always wrote her mother—"on its merits, or not at all."

Well, it saw the light at last. The payment was infinitesimal; but for that she did not care. It saw the light. Some minor publisher was willing to take the risk. It appeared; and one summer morning a copy came to me—sent with a batch of others for review.

I remember that Caroline was in the study when I untied the parcel. I paid no attention to it then; but I remember now she put the book into my hands, with the colour in her face, and looked at me a moment with strangely wistful eyes. Why should I have divined anything?

I am not a lenient critic—I have said it—and the story appeared to me to contain all the faults that aggravate me most. More than that, my morning's letters had been disturbing, and I was in an ill-humour.

I skimmed it with irritation, indeed it was fatality that I did not throw it aside, and leave it totally unmentioned in the paper, but I did not. My wife had put into my hands a vehicle

for my bad temper, and after an hour I swung my chair round to the desk, and wrote.

I will not quote the review that appeared in the next issue over the initials "A. W."; suffice it to say it was about the bitterest I have ever penned. An opening remark I made, suggested a humorous continuation, and I gave "A Kingdom by the Sea" nearly two-thirds of a column, satirising its weaknesses, and lashing the vanity of amateur authors. When it was done, I was rather pleased with myself.

The paper came out the following Thursday, and I observed that Caroline picked it up when it was delivered, and cut the leaves. Presently she put it down, white as death, and I saw she trembled.

"Are you ill?" I exclaimed, surprised.

"No, dear," she answered, gently; and I said nothing more.

It was that copy of the paper that I found among her belongings after her funeral. A copy, five years old, with the review marked—prominent with a mourning border drawn by the dead hands. I wondered why she had preserved it, and what

the ink-marks meant. Now that I know I have explained the meaning. I do not think there is anything to add.

HIS EXILE.

1871

HIS EXILE.

SCENE:—*The Plage at Dieppe.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ: MR. RIGBY BRERETON, *of the Stock Exchange*, and MR. CYRIL BLUNDELL.

(MR. BRERETON *is attired as befits a rich Englishman who is staying at the Hotel Royal with a wife and family, and has brought over his servants and horses. MR. BLUNDELL is dressed in a suit of white and a straw hat with an immense brim.*)

MR. BRERETON.

What! Can it be Blundell? Yes, it is. Why, what on earth are you doing here? The last time we met was the day I heard you preach at St.

Etheldred's at Ryde; and an uncommon good sermon, too.

MR. BLUNDELL.

You won't hear me preach again, Brereton. I have resigned St. Etheldred's, and am no longer in the church. You know I was always latitudinarian.

MR. BRERETON (*in astonishment*).

But what are you doing then? I know you haven't joined the Stock Exchange. Have you turned barrister or doctor, or have you been caught with the new craze and gone on to the stage? Perhaps you have turned author?

MR. BLUNDELL.

There you are right.

MR. BRERETON.

But a man can't live by writing; at least not much—unless he's a Dickens or a Tennyson. Besides you had little to do at Ryde, and you might just as well have done your writing there. You were always a bit of a puzzle to me, Blundell. Tell me about it. (*Takes out a fine cigar case*

and produces two choice Regalias. These being duly lit, the gentlemen walk leisurely up and down the Plage.)

MR. BLUNDELL.

Well you see, Brereton, it happened upon this wise. I took orders when I was three-and-twenty, believing rather more than I do at present. St. Etheldred's was £350 a year, and a house. Years went on, and I saw no chance of anything better, and my boys and girls were growing up.

MR. BRERETON.

But you should have laid yourself out for promotion, my dear boy. There are good things in the church.

MR. BLUNDELL.

No doubt. But as years went by I began to get rather broader views, and found it a little difficult to say what I did not myself implicitly accept. I never could follow the line of some men I know, who put on their full armour of belief with their surplice and leave it with their surplice in the vestry. Besides, to be candid, I

found the clerical life irksome. I am fond of shooting, I like to smoke a cigar in the open air, and I detest a black coat in the month of August.

MR. BRERETON.

Ah yes, I see. But what did you take to when you threw over orders?

MR. BLUNDELL.

Well, my wife came into money. Not much, you know; only £10,000 or thereabouts. But we put it into Consols, and settled it on her as tightly as could be done. Then we came over here. I have a little villa at Arques, under the shadow of the forest, with garden, orchard, and paddock. The whole thing stands me in about £40 a year. I keep my waggonette to bring us backwards and forwards to the town, and I earn easily about £400 a year with my pen. Sometimes I take a pupil; and then our joint income very nearly touches a thousand pounds. We can put by half of this every year, and live on the balance much more comfortably and pleasantly than ever we did at Ryde. I am only thirty-two now, and hope I may live twenty years longer. If

I do, my wife's £10,000 will be £15,000 or £20,000, and my two boys, whom I am educating myself, will be out in the world.

MR. BRERETON.

But what *do* you do with yourself here all the year round?

MR. BLUNDELL.

The day is never long enough for me. I have the boys to look after, of course. Then in the winter there is shooting, and in the summer fishing; and I enjoy both. Besides, I have a little boat of my own in the harbour—only four tons, but a good one. Then I grow flowers, and fruit, and vegetables. I make it a rule to never work less than twenty hours a week on my own account. You can get through a lot of writing in twenty hours, if you are not interrupted; and I am as happy as a man need be. I believe I am as happy in my own way as you in yours.

MR. BRERETON.

I should say a good deal happier. Money I don't find very difficult to make; but I do find it precious hard to keep. I make a lot, no doubt; but every now and again I lose a lot. But ex-

penses, they are enormous. I have a boy in the Blues, and two at Harrow, and two girls on my hands. What my wife's balls and dinner parties cost in the season is awful to think of. And then, too, I am a plain man. For myself, I should never wish anything better than to dine off the joint with a pint of claret. My house in London, and that place of mine down at Weybridge, are a nuisance. I don't get value for my money,—I don't indeed. And then I have to work like a horse. I never dare leave Leadenhall Street for more than a fortnight. And if things are not going well in the City, the anxiety is something terrible. It ages you before you know it. What are you going to do with your own boys?

MR. BLUNDELL.

Time to see. One of them wants to go to Texas. The other thinks of taking French allegiance and becoming an *avocat*. But there is plenty of time: whatever they do, they will have to earn their own living. What little money there is will go to their sisters. It is the best way.

MR. BRERETON.

I am sure it is; But, bless me, time has slipped

away. Let us get back to the Royal. You will dine with me, to-night, I am sure.

MR. BLUNDELL.

Thank you—not to-night. I must drive my folk back to Arques. But name your own day, and come over with Mrs. Brereton and all your company. I can give you the best of Normandy fare: splendid fruit, though I say it; fresh caught trout, poultry and salad; and I have a small bin of claret for my friends. Come early. We will have *déjeuner* in the forest, and dine under the verandah, and you can drive back in the cool of the evening.

MR. BRERETON (*with some animation in his face*).

Will to-morrow be too short notice?

MR. BLUNDELL.

Not a bit. You will have to take us as you find us. I only want to be sure you should not find us out. And now I must go to the Casino to hunt up my family. Good-bye! To-morrow, then, at—when?

MR. BRERETON.

At 11, my dear fellow, if it suits you.

* * * * *

MR. BLUNDELL (*striding towards the Casino*).

Poor Brereton! He has aged a good deal! Well, I would not change with him, although his place at Weybridge is certainly beautiful, and I shall never be able to afford such cigars as these. (*Whistles cheerfully.*)

MR. BRERETON (*moodily looking at the ground*).

Happy fellow! Long-headed too. As brown as a berry and as fresh as a boy. And he does it all on £500 a year. I can quite believe him. He was always a simple unaffected fellow. I wish I had got the return for my money that he gets for his: that's all I know. But I don't. (*Wanders dejectedly to the Hotel Royal in quest of cognac and curaçoa.*)

MISS KATE CARMINE.

MISS KATE CARMINE.

MISS KATE CARMINE was in a furious rage. In the first place she had just received her milliner's bill, which was preposterously extortionate. In the second place she had declined a part she wanted to play in a forthcoming comedy simply and solely because of her engagement to marry Captain Golightly of the "Blues". Last, but by no means least, the morning's post had also brought her a letter from Captain Golightly pleading to be released from the engagement, and set free. She ground her teeth, and the matutinal roll and chocolate was tasteless to her.

They had been engaged for six months. Now, in reading between the lines, it was plain to see that he had set his affections on someone else. He had been staying at a place in Berkshire

lately, and Miss Carmine had little doubt that it was there that he had met the lady who had supplanted her.

His letter had been addressed to her flat in Regent's Park, and forwarded, with the bill, to the rooms she was occupying in Brighton. She had opened it in bed, but a bed was too small to contain her after the perusal, and she proceeded to make a hurried *toilette*.

She had scarcely entered the sitting-room when there was a knock at the door. Her visitor was a charming little blonde who was staying with her mother on the floor below, and with whom she had established rather friendly relations. She was very young and innocent and sentimental—the young lady downstairs, not Miss Carmine—and, on the principle of extremes meeting, they had taken to each other from the hour of their first *rencontre*. The young lady thought it “so romantic” to be an actress, “so strange, and lovely;” and the actress, on the other hand, found it not unpleasant to be regarded as Minerva, and worshipped by a member of her own sex. She slightly patronised Miss Mildren, and Miss Mildren, who had often admired her from the stalls was

flattered by her notice. *Mrs.* Mildren, to be sure, raised certain objections to so "undesirable an intimacy," but then *Mrs.* Mildren was old-fashioned and "Methody", and had "year one" ideas on many points. As her daughter often said, she would have liked to see all her children marry curates.

"I can only stop the merest moment," exclaimed Miss Mildren, "but I just ran up to return your song. Thanks awfully."

"That's all right," said Miss Carmine. "How does it suit you?"

"It is charming, but of course I am not able to sing it properly. One wants to be a professional actress to do it justice."

They drifted, as they generally did drift, into a conversation in which Nellie Mildren asked innumerable questions about the Stage, and Miss Carmine gave discreet replies. On the whole the latter lady was not sorry for the interruption to her reverie. Her thoughts had been far from agreeable, and anything that tended to dispel them was welcome. At the same time, she concocted between her responses an imaginary note designed to bow Captain Golightly to the dust.

She was convinced she would not marry him now, though he entreated her to do so on his knees, but she felt also that to revenge herself for the slight he had put upon her was the one thing that could make life still worth the living.

Said Miss Mildren continuing her interrogatories:

"When are you going to act again, Miss Carmine?"

"Oh," said Miss Carmine, "I don't know, child. Soon, I daresay."

"It must be very delightful!"

"You think so?"

"Indeed! To be applauded, and say witty things, and wear half-a-dozen lovely frocks in an evening."

"One can wear lovely frocks, and say witty things off the Stage too, goose."

"Ah, but not act! It is really the acting I should like best of all, though I daresay you think I am frivolous, and only envy the gowns and applause. I would give my ears to be such an actress as you are, and I believe I *could* act if I were in a theatre."

"What?" asked Kate Carmine, "one cannot

act off the stage, did you say? And you a woman!"

Miss Mildren laughed.

"Of course I mean really act. We all pretend; but to positively take people in—to appear to be somebody we are not—the scenery and the footlights, and the rest of it, are necessary for that, Miss Carmine, you will admit it."

"I admit nothing of the sort," said Miss Carmine, sharply. "If you are an actress you can act just as well in a drawing-room as on the boards."

"Since you say so," murmured Nellie, "I can't deny it; but—" The ellipsis was expressive.

"Go on! You won't offend me."

"Well, I once saw you take the *rôle* of a circus girl. You spoke ungrammatically—that was the author, I understand that—but your manner, even your face, was not a lady's. You seemed to be an ignorant, low-bred little thing. In one act you were half-starved, and beaten, and your features were attenuated. Your voice—"

"My voice was like this!" She spoke a line of the part, with startling abruptness, and her companion clapped her hands.

"Oh, just like that. How clever you are! But could you sustain such an imitation for any length of time? You could not, for instance, be just as much the circus girl in a room."

"Indeed I could! I think I may safely wager that I could sit in a room, talking to you for half an hour, without you having the faintest suspicion who I was."

"Not *know* you?"

"Not know me from Adam. What do you say to that, Miss Nellie Mildren?"

"I say you are more wonderful even than I thought—if you could really do it."

"Only you are not quite sure it isn't a boast? Well, I can't blame you for that! Miss Mildren. I will let you in to a grave professional secret—nobody knows it but me: we players boast a good deal. Only, take my advice for this much, child; don't imagine, if you can do nothing at home that you would be great on the boards, and that the theatre makes the actress; it is the actress makes the theatre—and, as often as not, the play!" she added under her breath. "I daresay now, if your Mamma would let you, you would

like to go and pay golden guineas for elocution lessons, and come out at a *matinée* as Juliet?"

Nellie blushed, and hung her head.

"I used to wish it," she confessed, "but now—well, I have another kind of life to look forward to, Miss Carmine."

"You are going to be married?—And you never told me."

"It is so new," murmured Nellie, "we have only been engaged a few days. I met him just before I came down here, and this week he wrote, and—and told me that he cared for me—and—and—oh, I am so *awfully* happy!"

"Let me congratulate you," said Kate Carmine, "you will make a dear, good little wife, I am sure. And you deserve a good husband."

"He is splendid," declared the girl.

"'He' always is! And is Mamma agreeable—the course of true love runs smooth?"

"Mamma doesn't know him yet—I was staying with friends when we met. But she *will* consent, I know; if she didn't I think it would break my heart."

"So bad as that, eh?"

"As bad as that! Yes, a girl was never more

deeply in love than I am—or happier, for I shall see him again to-day. He is coming to Brighton to be introduced to Mamma this afternoon. Were *you* ever in love, Miss Carmine?”

“Once,” said Miss Carmine with an angry light in her eyes, “I was once in love very sentimentally indeed.”

“And you did not marry him? Why?”

“Never mind me,” said the actress, “tell me about yourself! What is your hero’s name?”

“His name is Arthur, and he is in the ‘Blues’—Captain Arthur Golightly. I don’t know what I’ve ever done to deserve such a lover—a little fool like me.”

“Captain Arthur Golightly,” repeated the actress, “that is a very nice name, isn’t it. And he is coming to Brighton to-day?”

She spoke with the utmost composure, and not a muscle betrayed the astonishment she was feeling. She had been fanning herself with the copy of the song the other had brought back, and she continued the movement steadily.

“What time do you expect him?” she murmured.

“I think he will be with us for tea; about

five I believe the train gets in. Five-ten it is, I think. We are going out to order cakes and things now, that is why I said I could only stay a minute."

She delayed her departure, nevertheless, for a quarter of an hour more, dilating on her hero's nobility and perfections, and Miss Carmine listened to her patiently, and even encouraged her to pursue the topic. All the while in her own mind she was saying that Fate had delivered her enemy into her hands, and debating the most diabolical method of carrying out her vengeance.

Left alone, at last, she sprang to her feet, and commenced to pace the room excitedly. He had had the audacity, the wickedness, to propose to Miss Mildren while he was still bound to herself. It was worse than she had suspected. He was engaged, actually engaged, to two women at once. Should she refuse to release him after all, and leave him to flounder out of the dilemma as best he could, or expose his falseness to Miss Mildren's mother? She had heard enough of the old lady to be sure of the reception he would meet with in the latter case. Really she was so entirely mistress of the situation that her only embarrass-

ment was *embarras de richesses*. What course should she adopt!

She stood at the window meditating, and saw the mother and daughter leave the house, and stroll away for their shopping and their walk. She drummed on the glass in perplexity, and beat her little foot in a devil's tattoo upon the floor. Then she stopped suddenly, with a short cry, for she saw Captain Golightly getting out of a fly in front of the door.

She had an inspiration. He did not know she was here, and he had never met Mrs. Mildren. She herself would play Mrs. Mildren's part, and give him in the person of Mrs. Mildren, but out of her own mouth, the dismissal he so richly deserved.

To fly downstairs, with the train of her *peignoir* in her hand, and capture the servant on the stairs was the work of an instant. To make that servant an accomplice by the gift of five shillings was no work at all. When Captain Golightly, after ringing the bell twice, was admitted, and enquired for Mrs. Mildren, he was shown respectfully upstairs into the apartments tenanted by Miss Kate Carmine, the actress, and left to

amuse himself with the daily paper until his hostess appeared.

She appeared in something under ten minutes, but to put her dressing-room in order afterwards took the bewildered domestic an hour. She came in, a stiff, spectacled figure, with pepper-and-salt hair, and a wry expression that did not encourage the suitor in his task.

"Captain Golightly, I think?" she said dryly. "I must apologise, sir, for keeping you waiting."

"Not at all, my dear madam," said Golightly. "Er—er—not at all. I have looked forward to this pleasure very ardently."

He pulled his moustache, and wondered why she did not shake hands with him.

"I—er—you are doubtless aware, Mrs. Mildren, of the object of my visit to-day? I—that is to say I present myself to—as your daughter has, of course, told you—to— She is quite well, I trust?"

"My daughter is in excellent health, Captain Golightly."

"Exactly," said Golightly. "I present myself, I was saying, to ask your consent to our engagement, and—er—to say that I hope you won't refuse to accord it."

"I refuse," said the old woman, "absolutely."

"To—? You refuse your consent, do I understand you to mean?" he stammered.

"Absolutely!"

"But—but my dear madam, may I ask why, on what grounds, you so cruelly blight my—and I may venture to add '*her*'—dearest hopes? You—you stagger me."

"I refuse, Captain Golightly, on the grounds of your private character; your wicked and dishonourable conduct. Can you deny that at the very time you met, and commenced to pay your addresses to, my daughter, you were engaged to be married to another lady? More than that, wretched creature, that you are engaged to her even now?"

"Good Lord!" said Golightly, and his face turned white. "I *cannot* deny it," he admitted after a pause, "it is true, and you have a right to say what you please to me. But let me also speak in my own defence, Mrs. Mildren. My engagement to the lady you mention was a huge mistake, and I have written to her explaining the change in my sentiments, and asking for my release. I love your daughter dearly,—very dearly indeed—

and would make her a good husband. The only folly I am guilty of in the matter springs from my devotion to her—for I was mad enough to beg her to be my wife before Miss Carmine's release came."

"A painted Jezebel!" said the disagreeable old woman. "She never *will* release you, you may be certain."

"You are mistaken in that," said the young man; "she is too proud to attempt to force my affections in any way, and too honest too. She is by no means a bad sort, Kate Carmine."

"Yet she enveigled you, by your own words, into the engagement you regret?"

"I never said so—I beg your pardon. The engagement was of my own making. Only it was a mistake. So far from blaming her for it, I shall always feel myself her friend."

"Poor old boy! murmured the actress inwardly. "Almost he is making me sorry for him; this will never do!"

"I have heard quite enough, Captain Go-lightly," she exclaimed, rising. "By your own statement you have behaved badly to my daughter, and, by your own showing, you have treated the

other woman like a brute. It only remains for us to bring a very painful interview to an end."

He picked up his hat awkwardly, moved to the door, opened it, and came back:

"Let me say 'good-bye' to her?" he begged.

"I cannot permit you to see my daughter any more; and I forbid you, moreover, to attempt to address her. I am a plain-spoken woman by nature, and I see no occasion to pick and choose my words with you. Captain Golightly, you are a heartless, cowardly, unscrupulous villain. You have wrecked one woman's life, and, but for the knowledge I have gathered of you, I have little doubt that you would have wrecked my child's. Leave the house, sir, and never let me hear of you again."

"Arthur! What is it?"

At the cry they both turned, and there, on the threshold of the open door, with trembling lips, and frightened eyes, was Nellie.

"Arthur," she repeated piteously, "what is the matter—what are you doing here?"

Now whether Kate Carmine would under any circumstances have carried out her imposture to the end is one of those things which the his-

torian, like the reader, can only conjecture; but it is a certain fact that at the sight of the girl's distress her heart gave a curious and distinctly compassionate thump. Then she looked at the man, and jealous as it made her, his love for the other woman was so visibly real that that affected her too. She had quite determined not to let them be happy with each other, but she was, as Golightly had declared, a good enough sort. She went forward, and took Nellie's hand, and "vowing she would ne'er consent, consented."

"Who *is* this woman?" demanded Nellie Mildren. "What did she mean by what she said to you?"

"Who *is* she?" echoed the bewildered Captain.

"She is Miss Kate Carmine, the actress," said the old woman, removing her spectacles and wig. "Not 'Hawkshaw, the detective,' but Miss Kate Carmine, who has to apologise to a perfect stranger"—she turned to Golightly as she spoke—"for a harmless jest. My dear sir, this little *fiancée* of yours was insisting half an hour ago that we players were dependent upon stage accessories for our art, and I promised to prove that I was able to deceive her in a room. I think I've

done it! And now, if I'm forgiven, she'll take you downstairs and introduce you to the real Mrs. Mildren, whom you won't find so formidable. May I—congratulate you both? Bless you my children; 'may you live long, and prosper'! Nellie, you goose, if you don't leave off staring at me like that, you'll make me vain."

The girl never knew who sent Miss Carmine the basket of flowers that was a sight to see the following afternoon, and ever afterwards vowed she was the most wonderful actress in the world. This is the true and authentic narrative of the actress's only matrimonial engagement; but she did manage to turn it to account. She was, on reflection, so highly delighted with the dramatic part she had played, that she got somebody to write the situation up for her, and in the comedy evolved from it, she scored, as all London knows, her most artistic and tremendous success.

ARCHIE'S ESCAPE.

ARCHIE'S ESCAPE.

He was saved—and he stuck to the Bar, and has taken silk. When his relatives moralise among themselves to-day, they say what a fortunate thing it was; they even weep reminiscently in reflecting on “dear Archie’s past peril.” “A girl like that—an actress!” They shudder, and thank their Saints.

And the man himself—Archibald Thorburn, Q.C.? He is complacent and contented. He has a wife who brought him ten thousand pounds, an extensive practice, and very desirable acquaintances. His house is one of the best in the Cromwell Road; he bought a yacht last “Long,” and the boyish folly of his bygone years is only remembered with a smile.

Where then does the sentiment come in—in

whom is it found? In the mind of the girl he nearly married. She does not wear sackcloth and ashes, and she did not renounce the Stage, and become a hospital nurse, in the style of the popular heroine of romance; on the contrary, she wears the scantiest of burlesque attire, and is a great deal more popular behind the footlights than she used to be. But sometimes—not often, I grant you—but sometimes, when she is what she herself would term “a cup low,” the recollection of that boy and girl courtship does come back to Jessie Dare, and she takes another half bottle of champagne to drive the thought away. If Archibald Thorburn were to speak of the episode, he would say: “I was a fool.” If his relations referred to it, they would say: “He was entrapped.” If Jessie Dare, who takes too much champagne, talked about it, the story would be very much like this.

She was an honest, hard-working little actress in the provincial mill when Thorburn met her first, and he fell in love with her at first sight. People will tell you there is no such thing as “love at first sight,” but, whatever may be said of it, it is just as substantial a quality as the feeling

upon which most marriages are made. Thorburn, at any rate, was captivated completely, and, soon after he obtained an introduction, he had become a frequent visitor at the Norwich lodging.

She did not live with her aunt, or her mother, or an elder sister, to play propriety: she "chummed," in her own words, with another girl of the Company, just as young as she was herself, and the tea parties in the shabby little parlour were very delightful to the young man accustomed to nothing of the sort at home. After the solemn hush of his mother's drawing-room, the suggestion of a picnic which was always to be found in these repasts, where they toasted their own muffins, and often bought them at the door after he had arrived, took his fancy. He was supposed to be a barrister already, but no briefs had ever come then, and he had begun to talk in a suicidal, reckless sort of way about Literature and living by his pen.

Jessie grew very fond of him, and one day he asked her if she would marry him.

"The Governor isn't a bad sort," he said, "and I'm perfectly certain would like you if he knew you. Look here, darling: with my allow-

ance and what I'll earn one way or another, we can be as comfortable as you please. We'll take furnished rooms, and you will give up your profession."

The next morning he went up to Town, and then occurred the first quarrel the young man had ever had with his father. Old Thorburn was horrified, and outraged. He told the boy that he had been entrapped by a designing girl for the sake of his expectations, but that she had reckoned without her host.

"I cannot prevent you marrying her," he said, "but I can prevent you doing it out of my purse. Remember this, Archie: if you make that creature your wife, you may both starve; I will never help you, or speak to you again, as long as I live."

Nor could arguments move him; "Take my advice, at least, on one point," he cried; "Tell her what I have said—and judge for yourself. See whether your fancied position is what attracts her or not. She is a mercenary adventuress!"

The scene was a stormy one, and when Archie went back to Miss Dare, it was with a

heavy heart, and a face that bespoke his ill-success before he told it.

He did not pain her by communicating his father's unjust suspicion—he was content to simply warn her they would have to depend upon his unaided exertions for their livelihood, and that their engagement must be long and weary. But—he was only human—truly and deeply as he cared for her, that word “mercenary” rankled, and was never quite absent from his mind. It came to him even when she kissed him sometimes, and said she still believed his father would relent. He wondered if she would kiss him if she did not still believe it, and was ashamed of himself, and wretched, at once.

They vowed to write to each other every day, and Archie returned to life in the Temple, and the vain attempt to place some of his voluminous MSS. He did not call upon his people, nor did any message arrive from them, begging him to do so. He had about twenty pounds, and he lived upon it economically till it was gone. When he had changed the last half-crown, he pawned his watch and chain, and lived upon that. But he still wrote daily to Jessie, and Jessie still

wrote hopefully of their gaining his father's consent. These letters of hers, designed to cheer and encourage him, maddened him with suspicion occasionally, and once he tore her tender little note into pieces, and stamped them among the burning coals.

It lasted three months, the loving unconsciousness of the girl, and the baseless suspicions of the man; and then the end came.

One afternoon when Archie was moodily puffing cheap tobacco in his chambers, to stay his hunger after a scanty dinner, there was a knock at the door, and Jessie walked in upon him. Her fears for him, her anxiety to know how he was faring, had proved too much for her, and she had come to verify her dread with her own eyes.

And she verified it. There was no concealing his position; it was too desperate. Moreover the old suspicion, the suspicion that was eating into his heart, prompted him to be explicit, and to disguise nothing. He told her his people had definitely discarded him, and he was unable to earn a sixpence. He said that he was power-

less without his father's help, and his father had washed his hands of him. And when he had finished, Jessie dried her eyes, and looked at him with a white set face, and answered: "I must give you up."

Oh, he pleaded to her—he pleaded to her passionately, but he could not shake her in her resolve;

"It is I who have done this," she said, "it comes from me! Archie, you will tell your father it is all over, and we will say 'good-bye' to each other—here and now."

He was as white as she by this time, and for reply he broke into a torrent of reproaches and accusations.

"My people knew you better than I," he said; "I have found you out at last."

"You have 'found me out'?" she gasped.

He waved her from him—and she went.

She never defended herself then or since; he has never dreamt that he lied down to the present day. His father welcomed him with open arms, and there was a special port after dinner, while they sat *en tête-à-tête*.

"I was right, my boy, you see," chuckled old Thorburn, playfully.

"Yes, Governor," said Archie, "you were right."

MRS. MONTGOMERY.

MRS. MONTGOMERY.

THAT I was in love with her admits of no denial. To commence with, I had only chosen that particular house because she had been standing at the window, and when I found the terms were ordinary terms, and that a single bedroom was vacant, I became one of the boarders with a degree of pleasurable anticipation.

I established myself the following morning, arriving with my impedimenta in a hansom, and descending to luncheon, when the gong sounded, with my best coat on. The woman whose face had captivated me was not present, and I immediately feared she might have left.

To my unspeakable delight she entered while I was endeavouring to console myself with the reflection that I was anyhow comfortably in-

stalled, and that the glimpse I had obtained of her the preceding day in passing had probably saved me from a less desirable establishment. Her seat, by good chance, was next to me, and though I did not in this way have so favourable a view of her, the arrangement held out the promise of agreeable conversations.

Let me declare at once that the promise was fulfilled. I was introduced to her, and learnt that her name was Mrs. Montgomery. She was a slender, graceful woman, with the grandest grey eyes I have ever looked on, and a voice that made commonplaces delightful.

I found that she had been staying in the house for three months. She was a widow, and an artist in so far as she painted in water-colours, and disposed of her work as often as she was able to find a customer. Her age was perhaps two or three and thirty, and when I knew her better I discovered that she had had considerable experience of the world. Not that she referred expressly to her experiences, but rather that they tinged her remarks, and imparted to them a certain breadth and depth not to be found in the criticisms of the rest. I might even say a

certain bitterness. She was never cynical, but "bitterness" conveys my meaning fairly well. She appeared to have lived and suffered, and now and then, when she dropped the mask, and the real woman spoke to me, I almost felt as if she were guiding my hand towards a half-healed wound. I was interested, and curious, and before very long I found out that the curiosity she excited was not limited to myself.

A boarding-house is a very hotbed of comment and inquiry, and it was not to be supposed that a woman like Mrs. Montgomery could escape the common lot. She was, moreover, singularly reticent about herself, and thus gave the other women's imagination greater scope still. Where she came from, who she was, how long her husband had been dead, such matters formed food for daily gossip, and there was not even wanting the plain and spiteful woman to suggest the possibility of her being a *divorcée* and not a widow at all.

I was a man, and a young one, and my zeal outran my discretion. I had the mortification of perceiving that in my ardent remonstrances against this miserable imputation I procured for myself

the reputation of having fallen in love with the lady, and, so far from endearing myself to her by my championship, succeeded on the contrary in creating a coldness in her bearing towards me which made me wretched. I do not mean, of course, that she was aware that I had championed her, but that she was speedily rallied on my devotion. I have just said I was young. I did what every young man does under such circumstances; I asked her the reason of her altered manner to me.

She lifted her eyebrows in faint protest at such stupidity.

"I really don't understand you," she said. "How have I altered?"

She had, dexterously enough, reversed the positions, and the awkwardness of explanation was now mine.

"You were more friendly to me," I stammered, "more kind."

"My dear Mr. Gore—," she murmured, deprecatingly,

"You—of course it is difficult to say," I went on, with hot cheeks, "but you are stiffer to me than you were. Have I offended you?"

"Not in the very faintest particular," she answered; "pray believe it."

I had perforce to be content, but strove by every means in my power to regain the former footing.

I was annoyed at this stage by the arrival of a new boarder whom I immediately observed to be strongly attracted by Mrs. Montgomery. He was a big, black-bearded man of about forty, and, though he did not address her across the table, I detected his eyes attentively fixed upon her more than once. My one relief was the fact that she, on her side, studiously avoided his gaze, and even, I thought, appeared distressed by it.

It had only needed the element of rivalry to make me her abject slave, and, though she gave the bearded stranger no encouragement, I hated him, and adored her most desperately. The chatter of the facetious landlady goaded me to exasperation, for the new-comer's name chanced to be also "Montgomery", and this gave opportunities for second-class, boarding-house wit of the most approved type. "Mr. Montgomery, will you pass Mrs. Montgomery the salad?" "Mrs. Montgomery, Mr. Montgomery is waiting per-

mission to smoke." I figuratively gnashed my teeth, and showed my disdain of such bad breeding without disguise.

I must admit, however, that Mrs. Montgomery's avoidance of the man suffered no abatement as the days went by, and so far as I dared to hope I was not indifferent to her, I did hope. One afternoon she was especially nice to me. We were alone in the dining-room after luncheon, and I fancied I read in her voice the dawn of the feeling I so ardently desired. We talked of many things; of my chances in my profession; the value to a young fellow at the outset of his career of a good woman's influence. I said I personally regarded it as more valuable than either money or interest, and, while she did not agree with me *in toto*, she acknowledged that she also felt it a noble mission on a woman's part to play mentor to a boy of talent.

"As a wife," I said, "for preference?"

She smiled; "Not necessarily as a wife," she replied, "for the disparity in their ages would be against such a relationship as that. Say as a friend where it is possible."

"Between you and me, Mrs. Montgomery," I

asked, "is it possible with us? I mean of course supposing I have talent, and that you have the necessary liking for me."

I hoped she would say "no", and she did. But she betrayed none of the confusion I had hoped for.

"Circumstances prevent it with us," she said gently, "nor am I at all qualified to play such a *rôle*."

I touched her hand. Emotion was mastering me, and what words I might have uttered next I can only guess. Happily, or unhappily, the door opened at that juncture, and our *tête-à-tête* was ended.

I went out into the streets with my head in a whirl. Almost I meditated proposing to her, rather than keep my love locked for ever in a breast for which it was too big. I walked without stopping for some hours, and returned to the house only as the gong was proclaiming dinner.

To my disappointment Mrs. Montgomery's chair was vacant, and she was evidently spending the evening out. I had just noticed that the stranger's place was empty too when I heard that she had left for good.

"Left?" I exclaimed. "It—it was very sudden, was it not?"

"Quite," said the landlady, "she told me she had had news, or something. That's two people I've lost to-day. Mr. Montgomery has gone as well."

My world had fallen about my ears. I spent the evening in my bedroom, smoking, and ruminating on the inexplicable occurrence. I felt as bereft as if I had lost a *fiancée* or a wife, and the idle talk of the others below, their indifference, or callousness, as I termed it, was hateful to me.

The following morning when I took in my shaving water, a letter for me was lying on the can. It was from Mrs. Montgomery, and ran thus:

"DEAR MR. GORE,

"In leaving Woburn Place so very abruptly, I feel that I owe, to you at least, some explanation. We were good friends, and I should not like you to think I had been guilty of any discourtesy. I have left it with my husband from whom I have been separated for three years. Chance brought us together again in the boarding-house, and we

intend to make a home together once more. I have told you this for the reason I have given, but if I may ask a favour of you, it is that you will consider it a confidence, and refrain from mentioning it to the rest. With kindest regards,

“Believe me,

“Yours sincerely,

“HELEN MONTGOMERY.”

I came across the letter yesterday, I have always kept it. But I never saw Mrs. Montgomery again.

... to make a house for the poor
 have told you this for the reason I have given
 but if I say that a house is not to be built
 till another is a condition, and yet the
 necessity of it is the same, this is the
 "History of the"

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PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

THE HISTORY OF THE

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

SCANDAL never touched Mrs. Major O'Shaugnessey, nor hinted by so much as a lifting of the eyebrow that her interest in her husband's *protégé* young Vyner was anything more than strictly platonic, but the following incident goes to prove that in her own placid, self-contained, undemonstrative way, she cared for him.

She was an unattractive little woman with mouse-coloured hair, and a voice that seldom rose above a whisper. Perhaps she was forty at the time, but her age was unimportant; it really did not matter at all, and nobody was concerned to guess it. When she entered an assembly of strangers after being announced, her timid demeanour appeared to deprecate the false impression to which her inappropriate name might have

given rise, and she, so to speak, shrank through life in a faded dress apologising to people for existing.

Young Vyner had been introduced to her shortly after he was gazetted. O'Shaugnessey and his father had been cronies out somewhere in O'Shaugnessey's youth—in India, or the Cape—and the Major made the lad at home in his house for the dead man's sake.

He was a pretty pink-and-white boy, Bertie Vyner, with a complexion that was the envy of every *débutante* he danced with, and a natural wave in his hair that the *débutantes'* crimping irons were powerless to imitate. By the side of the adipose Major, who suffered with his liver, alternated by a touch of gout, he was the ideal of health and good-looks.

He had accomplishments also. He could sing a sentimental ballad with a sympathetic little voice and much expression, and gaze so admiringly the while at dull Mrs. O'Shaugnessey that the fervour of the whole performance made her blush. He told her of his conquests, and flirtations, and she admonished him for his frivolity, almost as a mother or elder sister might have done; and then

he chaffed her for her puritanical ideas, reversing the positions till he was the Master, and she became a disconcerted girl. Her confusion at such times was not unpleasant, though afterwards she always frowned on him for a day or two severely. It was purely fortuitous, but O'Shaugnessey was never present on the occasion of these conferences.

Or if he was present, he was asleep. He slept a good deal, O'Shaugnessey, being fond of heavy dinners, and sound port. He had been good company enough when he married, but he was fifteen years his wife's senior, and, so far as the lady can be said to have ever been young, she had retained her youth better than he. But nobody pitied her, because she was so plain.

The O'Shaugnesseys and young Vyner were at Dieppe the summer that young Vyner fell in love. The boy was very deeply enamoured indeed, and, having some private means, he went the length of proposing to marry. Nor had he chosen unwisely; Miss Eversleigh—a connection of the Eversleighs of Hatley—was a charming girl, quite the type of an English beauty, and boasted besides the lasting attraction of a substantial *dot*.

She was staying with her mother at the Hôtel de Ville, and, after the first formalities, young Vyner and she used to wander away beyond the eye of chaperonage and confide to each other private and uninteresting truths. They encountered each other, as everybody encounters everyone, in the Casino each morning, and, after risking a few franks at *petits chevaux*, would stroll out on to the Terrace, and, finding a couple of sufficiently isolated chairs, spend the hours in each other's society with great satisfaction until lunch time. In the evening they met again, and there were delirious occasions in the ball-room when Bertie Vyner's arm encircled Beatrice Eversleigh's waist, and the stars looked exceptionally bright afterwards, and the white-horses of the sea took the shape of orange-blossoms.

When Mrs. Major O'Shaugnessey first learnt that young Vyner's intentions were serious, he and she were alone in the O'Shaugnessey's drawing-room. Bertie was smoking a cigarette, and Mrs. O'Shaugnessey was doing the dull needlework that was usual with her.

"Bertie," she said in her hushed, tired voice—she always called him Bertie, it was natural—

"were you with Miss Eversleigh again all this morning?"

Vyner nodded; "Why not?" he asked.

"I don't like to see you flirt so desperately," she said; "it isn't nice, Bertie; I have told you so often."

"I know you have," he responded, and his tone suggested reservations.

"Well, why do you do it?" insisted Mrs. O'Shaugnessey, softly. "People say unkind things about you for it, and about Miss Eversleigh too."

"About Miss Eversleigh?" The lad's tone was becoming energetic.

"Certainly about Miss Eversleigh. When a girl deliberately encourages a man's attentions, she lays herself open to remark. You are putting her, or encouraging her to put herself, in a false position."

Bertie smoked rapidly, and then pitched his cigarette out of window with an ejaculation.

"Mrs. O'Shaugnessey," he exclaimed, "I love Beatrice Eversleigh; I'd go through fire and water for her; I mean to make her my wife! If a fellow can't talk to the girl he's going to marry

without a parcel of scandal-mongers chattering, I should like to know to whom he *is* allowed to speak!"

Mrs. O'Shaugnessey's pale face was disturbed. She rested her needlework in her lap, and looked at him for several seconds, before she made reply.

"Of course I didn't understand, Bertie," she said at length. "I did not know you were so fond of her as that. I thought you were only 'amusing' yourself as you call it. And Miss Eversleigh—is your affection returned?"

"I haven't asked her yet," he acknowledged, "but I have hopes of course. I *think* she likes me; don't *you*?"

"It is very difficult to tell; a girl's manner sometimes means so little."

"She is always glad to see me."

"Everybody is glad to see you, Bertie, you are so lively."

Young Vyner groaned. "I shouldn't be very lively if I doubted my chance. She—oh, she's an Angel upon Earth!"

"When do you put your chance to the test, soon?"

"Thursday," declared Vyner; "you know we are all going to picnic at Arques, and the—well, the opportunity will be favourable. You'll wish me luck, won't you? And say a good word for me in the meanwhile when you can!"

Mrs. O'Shaugnessey resumed her monotonous stitching, and answered the question with bent head:

"I wish you every happiness," she murmured. "I think you have done well not to be precipitate. Now run away, little boy, and leave me to get on with my work."

It was the next day that Mrs. Major O'Shaugnessey had a conversation with Beatrice Eversleigh; she had never been so talkative to the girl before. Their colloquy touched on confidential topics, and was almost tender in its unusual familiarity.

After a little pause Mrs. O'Shaugnessey gave an embarrassed cough, and "took a liberty." She said it was "a liberty," but explained that good motives prompted it.

"I have noticed that Mr. Vyner seems to find great pleasure in your society," she said. "I have known Bertie Vyner since he was the merest boy,

Miss Eversleigh; he tells me all his peccadilloes, and the rest of it. He is not the nicest companion for a young girl."

In a moment's silence both looked at the sea.

"Don't think I am suggesting that his interest in you is returned," continued Mrs. O'Shaugnessey drearily, "of course I could not do that. I only mean that it would be wiser of you not to allow him to be your friend. He—it is difficult to say—but for so young a man he is very bad indeed."

"'Bad'?" said Miss Eversleigh, "I—I don't think I follow you, Mrs. O'Shaugnessey?"

"He is not nice-minded, not—not a young man I should like my daughter, if I had one, to talk to. If she proposed to marry him—it may sound exaggerated—I would rather see her die. I know so much of Bertie Vyner; it may be I have let him confide too freely in me, but, as I say, I have heard almost every incident of his life. I scarcely know how to explain myself—he is *morbidly* vicious."

Beatrice Eversleigh inspected her sunshade raptly, and her lips were tremulous.

“Everything is relative,” she said at last; “I don’t deny that you have shocked me greatly, but on the other hand so much depends upon the point of view. I have given a very sincere friendship to Mr. Vyner; will it—would it—pain you, or be impossible, to let me judge of his character myself by some facts?”

Then Mrs. Major O’Shaughnessey raised her tired voice again, and communicated a long and villainous lie. And when she had finished, her companion’s face had an expression on it that was bad to see upon a girl’s face, and which, in the nature of things, few young girls’ faces are ever called upon to wear.

Young Vyner never understood why Beatrice Eversleigh refused him with such contempt that Thursday, or why she cut him dead the following season when they met in the Park. He said she was a “Heartless flirt,” and railed against her to Mrs. Major O’Shaughnessey for at least twelve months, on the afternoons when he sat on a stool in the lady’s drawing-room holding her wools, and being platonically petted—the afternoons when the fat Major was out, or had gone to sleep.

“Was he treated cruel then by his naughty sweetheart,” Mrs. Major O’Shaughnessey would murmur; “come, tell ‘mother’ all about it!” And she stroked his pretty hair, and gave him *petits fours*, and another lump of sugar in his tea. But nobody ever suspected she felt more than what she showed—not even young Vyner. You see she was so plain.

THE PINK PINAFORE.

THE FINE LINGON

THE PINK PINAFORE.

SHE wore it on the day they parted. In a manner it was connected with their parting, and he will never think of her without remembering it.

It was ugly. He had never questioned her taste until the morning she brought the material home, and showed it to him. Perhaps in the piece, on the shop counter, it had not been so bad, but cut to two or three yards it was odious, jarring, abominable. It set his teeth on edge to look at it, and he shuddered.

The colour of the ground was supposed to be pink, but it was a pink several shades too deep, and the flowers on it were a staring red. How a girl in her senses could propose to kill her

delicate complexion by so ill-chosen an article of attire was as an artist beyond him.

"Good Heavens!" he said.

Her lips quivered. They had been married six months, and he had never spoken so to her before.

"Don't you like it?" she murmured.

"Like it? My dear child!"

She took the parcel up nervously. She had bought it to render herself the prettier in his eyes, and he rewarded her intention like this.

"What is the matter with it?" she asked.

"The 'matter' with it? Merciful Powers!"

"Please do not echo every word I say; I ask you what faults you find?"

"It is the wrong colour; it is hideous."

"Pink," she said, doggedly, "becomes me."

"Do you call it 'pink'?" He dabbed in the corner of his canvas with his brushes. "This is pink—this, and this. The stuff is red."

"It is pink," she repeated; "any paler tint would be useless. It is meant for a pinafore, and personally I like it very much."

"You are, of course, the person most concerned," he answered; "only I may be allowed to

know something of colour—it happens to be my profession.”

“If a woman were wise,” rejoined his wife, “she would never marry a painter. Because you can draw a cow, you think you can teach me how to dress.”

“At least I can teach you how *not* to dress, if you seriously contemplated putting the thing on!”

“‘Contemplated’!—I still contemplate. I am going into the house to cut it out.”

They were standing in the garden beside his easel, and he shrugged his shoulders, and continued his work—a bit of landscape seen from the bank of the stream. The girl went indoors, and presently there came to him, among the hum of the bees, and the birds’ twitter, the rattle of a sewing machine. She was making the pinafore as she had threatened.

“She is very obstinate,” he mused contemptuously, “very silly, and young!” But he did not really believe she would finish it, or understand that she was feeling hurt. It was their first quarrel, and he was too many years her senior.

The next morning she came into the studio

like a defiant child, and paused with an embarrassed smile on the threshold. She had the debated pinafore on.

"Is it so awful?" she said. "Come now, confess, is it so dreadful after all?"

She had stitched it, and befrilled it, and be-ribboned it until it was in form as dainty a little garment as a lady need wear. Only the colour, the uncompromising colour, remained. If he had had tact, he would have temporised, and declared that it looked better than he had expected. It was all she wanted of him, and then she would have put it away, and he would never have seen it any more. But she had thrown aspersions on his judgment, and he was not inclined to make the sentence any less severe on that account. He showed his disgust without reserve. He told himself it would be a mistake to treat his wife as if she were a baby, and expressed his opinion plainly.

"As far as possible, you have disfigured yourself," he said.

"By putting on a pinafore?"

"By putting on a pinafore that is essentially atrocious."

"I have taken a lot of pains with it," she said, humbly: "it is the shape you always liked."

"I say nothing against the shape to-day," he replied; "it is, as you know perfectly well, the colour I object to."

"The pink?" she said, looking at the floor.

"The red," answered her husband firmly.

"Now let us get at it!" she exclaimed. "Is not the ground a pink?"

"A very ugly pink, yes."

"But *pink*?"

"The *ground* is—yes."

"And the flowers are a trifle deeper?"

"Not at all. The flowers are vividly red."

"To make such a fuss—to be so unkind—about a shade or two."

"I do not mean to be unkind, but say 'two or three' shades. If you are really so anxious to wear the thing, send it to the wash first. As it is, it is an eyesore."

"I am sorry indeed. An 'eyesore' to you—your wife!"

"The abomination my wife has bought, you should say."

"Oh, don't let us quibble over terms. Plainly, you cannot bear to look at me."

"At the pinafore!"

"When it is I who wear it?"

"It is you who *are* wearing it, certainly. I have not seen it on anyone else; if I did—"

"You would doubtless find it more endurable."

"I fervently hope not—the less durable the better!"

"I said 'endurable'. You can joke on such a subject—and I believed you loved me!"

"You are being ridiculous," observed the man testily. "You know, as well as I do, that the colour is too deep, and yet you will not admit it. I thought you were above such nonsense. Now let me get on with my work."

She looked at him pleadingly, but he took no notice. As he bent over the canvas he was conscious that she lingered a moment or two as if expecting him to speak again. Then the door closed, and he was alone.

She was intensely miserable. Trivial as the matter was, it was their first difference, and she felt it keenly. She was angered with herself and

him. As for the wretched pinafore that had caused their tiff, she would have liked to tear it into strips, and make a bonfire of the fragments. Only her pride prevented her going upstairs, and divesting herself of it immediately. She wandered out into the garden, with tears in her eyes. She tried to read, but could not concentrate her attention on the book, and next considered taking a long walk. It wanted three hours to luncheon. If he got on with his picture well during the morning, he would be in a better temper when they met, and, before taking her seat at table, she would effect the desired change in her toilette, and send the pinafore to the laundry at once. In the meanwhile, she had only to banish uncomfortable thoughts from her mind. She was already encouraged, and felt better.

He had glimpses of her from the studio window while she paced the grass and thought these thoughts, and then he became engrossed by his work, and painted on without remembering her. By and bye he felt hungry, and waited for the gong to summon him to lunch. He pulled out his watch, and was surprised to find it long past the luncheon hour. He called to the ser-

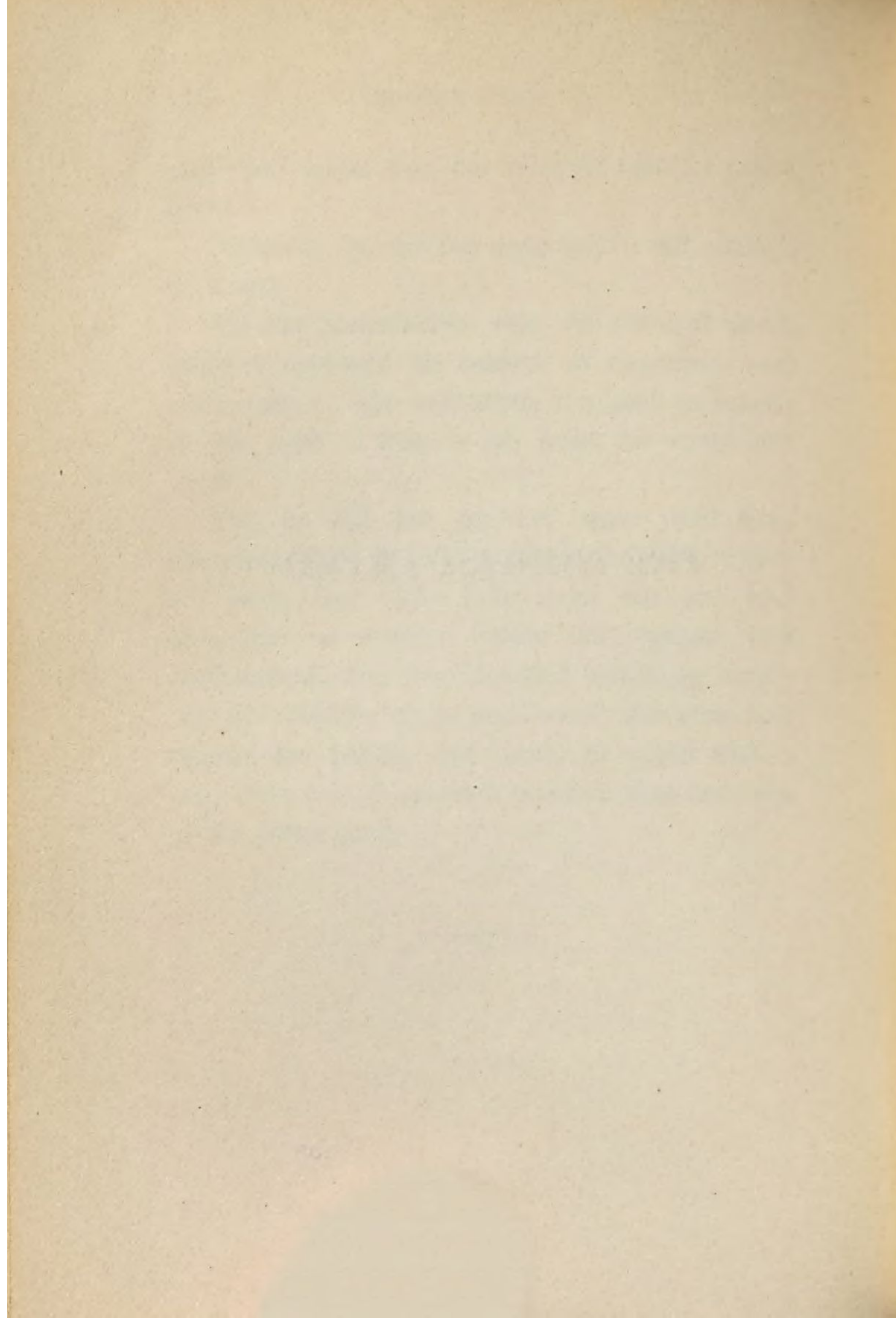
vant, and learnt that her mistress had not come back.

"I think, sir, she has gone out in the canoe," he heard.

He was perturbed by this, for she had never properly mastered the science of canoeing, and being late—. He went along the bank in search of her, with a fear in his heart he would not speak.

But he did not see her again until next morning, when he was taken to the room where her body lay. The little straw hat she had worn was on a chair beside her, soaked and mud-stained, and her drenched hair hung limply over the lifeless breast and arms. Someone had crossed her hands, and these, he noted with a sob, were joined across a pinafore that now was of the palest pink.

THE NIHILIST CREED.



THE NIHILIST CREED.

THE particulars herein contained I have gathered from a very close friend at present resident in London. He is a Nihilist by conviction, and, in fact, belongs to the Nihilist secret organization. On this point, of course, neither could I ask him any questions, nor would he have answered any; but with regard to the general principles of Nihilism he is perfectly frank.

The idea that Nihilists are *ipso facto* Atheists is a misconception. You can be a Nihilist, and join the innermost circles of Nihilism, whatever your religious faith. No abjuration of previous creeds is necessary. All that is demanded is the acknowledgment that religious creeds, in common with all others of every kind, must be absolutely abandoned when the interests of humanity (as Nihilism understands them) are in question.

The bulk, however, of the Nihilists are Atheists; meaning by Atheists all those who have no positive belief in the existence of a personal and conscious Divine Being, or who, if they admit His existence as a remote possibility, yet hold that He is in no way concerned with the affairs of this world, and that mankind must solve the problem of life for themselves. A believing Christian who becomes a Nihilist must, logically, be persuaded that in the present days God does not interfere in the government of the world, and that we are justified in disregarding all laws, whether commended to us on human or divine authority, if we sincerely believe that the good to be gained will counterbalance the evil to be done by its achievement. A Nihilist has always before his eyes the emancipation of humanity or something that he calls emancipation. He declines to discuss any arguments founded upon religion, or upon political or economical or moral philosophy, or even upon such ordinarily accepted doctrines as that of the sanctity of human life. He will not even admit that the family is a necessary factor in the organization of the world. His mind is filled with the one belief that the world is

radically wrong; that it is full of misery and oppression; and that it must be remodelled. If you attempt to persuade him that the existing condition of things is the result of fixed laws as ascertainable as are the simplest laws of nature, he will answer that what you call laws are only the generalizations of pedants. He classes publicists, politicians, moralists and priests all together in the same category with Dr. Pangloss. They all, he will tell you, argue in a circle. They find a world of sin and misery. But, as God made it, it must be a good world. So they demonstrate it to be a good world. And then, having proved it to be a good world, they argue back that there must have been a God who made it; and so they go on to tell us that the rules of this unhappy world, such as it is, are God's rules, and that we are bound to obey them. All this kind of thing the Nihilist refuses to listen to. He has thought it all out.

Thus, then, the first duty of the Nihilist is to alleviate human misery; and in this task he identifies himself with the whole human race. He may be devoted to his parents and to his family; he may have friends who are dearer to

him than himself; but his duty to humanity is above all. He who loves father or mother, or wife or child, or brother or sister, or friend more than he loves humanity as a whole has no proper conception of life, and does not even deserve to live. As for the means to be employed in working out the liberation of the world, the Nihilist does not trouble himself. The thing has to be done; and all means are lawful that bring about the desired object from incendiarism and assassination down to pamphlets and public discussion; all alike are commendable, and each is to be used as it may best suit the particular occasion.

A Nihilist, as such, has certain points in common with a Buddhist. He is indifferent to any future state, and has consequently no fear of death. All that concerns him is to do his duty to humanity in this life. His reward will be that he has left the world better than he found it: nor is it necessary, to make this reward perfect, that it should be ever consciously enjoyed. Rewards and punishments in a future state are inducements only to the selfish. And thus a true Nihilist, like a true Buddhist, has no individuality other than that which the laws of nature absolutely

entail upon him. He has a family as he has friends. He has a life, which tyrants can take from him before his time. But family, friends, and life itself are what schoolmen would have termed the mere "accidents" of human existence. The essence or true secret of human existence is the Cause.

It is further urged on behalf of Nihilism that there is nothing in it at all akin to the revolting doctrines of certain sects which have at various times disgraced the world. The most ardent Nihilist may be at the same time a dutiful son, a faithful husband, a good father and a true friend. He may also be a humane man and averse to the taking of life or the infliction of pain. But each and all of these considerations he will sink in a moment if it be necessary to show his duty to the Cause. Between these minor matters and the paramount duty which he owes the Cause, he draws the same distinction as that drawn in some Churches between mere matters of discipline and absolute matters of faith.

It follows then, that Nihilists are, as a general rule, people of the strongest determination of character in one main direction, and that no tie,

and no consideration, however great or absorbing, will deter them from accomplishing, if possible, that which they believe to be their absolute duty.

Ivan Ivanovitch and Paul Petrowolski were typical examples of people such as these, and, notwithstanding twenty years of friendship unbroken by a single quarrel, neither would have hesitated to sacrifice the other if called upon to do so in their Cause's interest.

Ivanovitch was a widower with two children—a son of one-and-twenty and a daughter of nineteen. Their mother had died when Olga was born, and Ivanovitch devoted himself to them heart and soul. Petrowolski had never married. An unhappy love affair in his early youth had influenced his life so far as women were concerned, and he lived with Ivanovitch, concentrating all his power of affection on his friend and his friend's children.

It would have been difficult to find four people more entirely united. Apart from having sympathies and ties in common, they were bound together by an indissoluble bond, and indeed they lived in an Utopia of their own. Serge and Olga were so wrapped up in each other's mutual

hopes and aspirations that neither seemed to care for the society of others of their own age. Olga's beauty and fascination had brought her several admirers, but she used always to say that she should never marry any one less noble, and disinterested, and charming than her brother; and Serge would respond that as he was quite assured he should never meet with a girl half so lovely and sweet-tempered and unselfish as Olga, he should never marry at all.

Petrowolski went to Paris on business, and on the night of his return after a short stay, he complained of a bad head-ache. He could not eat his dinner, and he went to bed at nine o'clock. The next morning he was worse, and the doctor who was called in said that there were symptoms of typhoid-fever. In spite of every attention Petrowolski grew rapidly worse, and in ten days he was dead.

Before his death he gave a sealed packet of papers to Ivanovitch, who placed them carefully in his pocket-book. Petrowolski had then looked at Olga and Serge, who stood weeping by the bedside, and said in low but distinct tones:

"You are witnesses that I gave my charge to your father and that he accepted it."

"Yes," they answered together, "we are witnesses."

But scarcely had the dead man been buried when it was discovered that Ivanovitch was sickening for the same dangerous malady. When the doctor had left, after sending a nurse and giving cautious directions to Olga and Serge, who flatly refused to be excluded from their father's sick room, Ivanovitch called them to him. He gave them some solemn commands, and made them swear that they would obey them.

"There is not a day to be lost," he said impatiently. "Had I not been kept to my bed, I should have been on my way to St. Petersburg before now. You are young and inexperienced, Serge, but there can be no danger if you are careful to follow out my instructions to the letter."

When he saw that for the time being they were almost paralysed with grief at the thought of leaving him, and when he remembered that this would be their first work for the Cause, he reproached himself that he had not allowed Serge to take his own place occasionally, in order that

he might have gained some experience. Then he spoke savagely, though his heart swelled with love for both his children.

“You are not afraid?” he asked.

Serge started quickly. His eyes flashed with sudden fire.

“I am not afraid of death for myself, only for you, my father, and for Olga. Poor Olga! May not she stay with you?”

Ivanovitch looked at his daughter. Her face was as white as the sheet on which his hand rested, but her features were firmly set. She did not flinch under his look.

“Failure means dishonour,” said the father. “You must not fail. Olga is quicker witted than you, Serge. I neither doubt your zeal nor your courage, but astuteness is indispensable in a case like this. You are inclined to be rash and impetuous.”

He hesitated a moment or two, then he took one of Olga’s hands in both his own, and gave a curious smile.

“You must go, my child,” he said to her. “In three weeks’ time, if you manage well, you

will both be back with me, and I shall be proud of my daughter and my son."

* * * * *

A week later Europe was ringing with the news of the assassination of General Alexander Balanikoff, a personal friend and devoted adherent of the Czar, and a determined enemy of the Nihilists. A small case of dynamite had been placed in a despatch-box which the General had with him in his brougham. The explosion had occurred as he was on his way to his master's palace, and General Balanikoff had been killed outright—blown to atoms—also his coachman and one of the horses. It is needless to say that the police used the utmost vigilance, and the General's numerous friends did all in their power to discover his murderer.

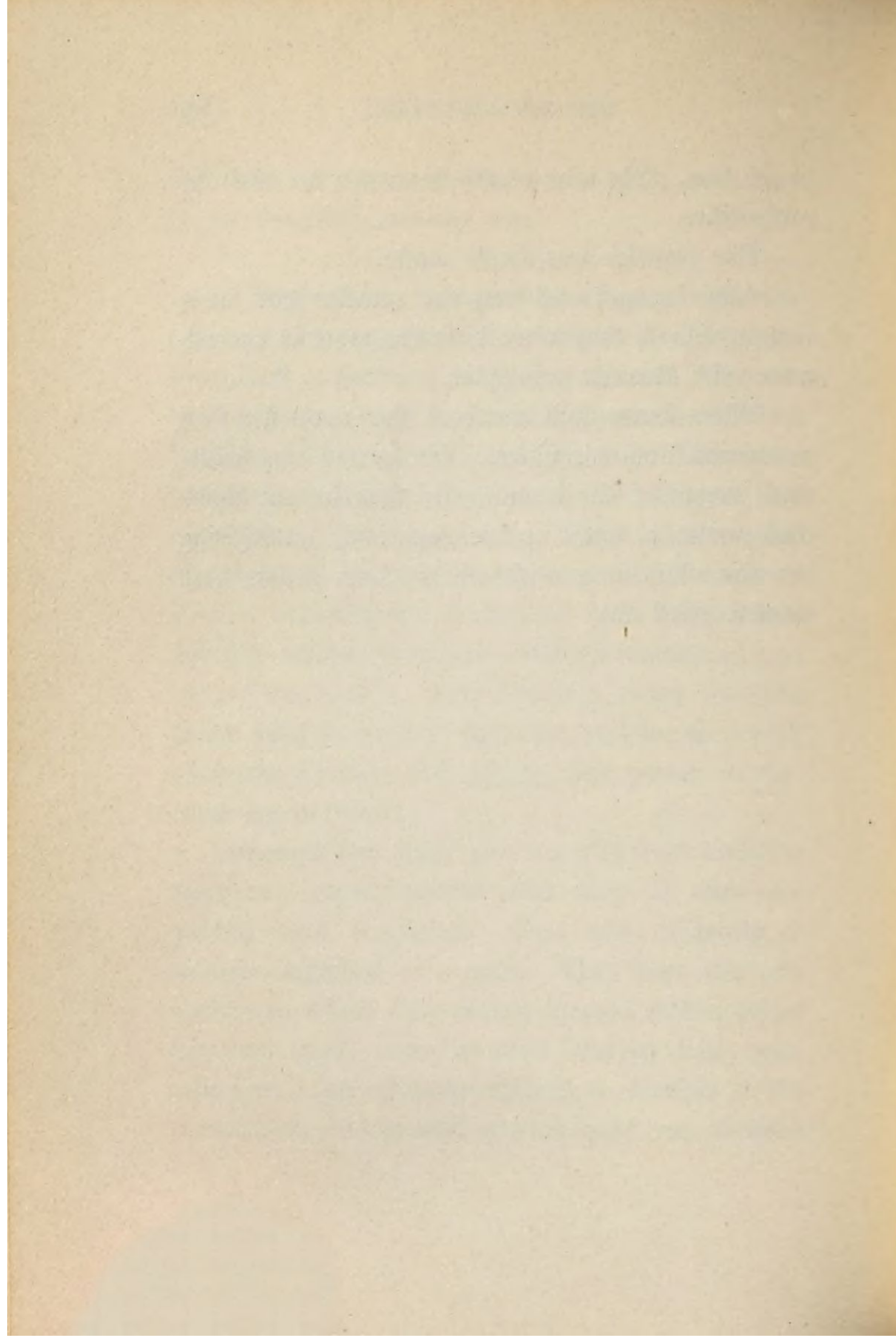
Amongst the many persons who were arrested were two young people who were at once regarded with suspicion. One was evidently a woman disguised as a man. They bore the privations to which they were subjected with singular bravery, until, after unusual severity had been practised, one of them offered to confess if his companion, who he said was his sister, was allowed

to go free. She was wholly innocent, he told the authorities.

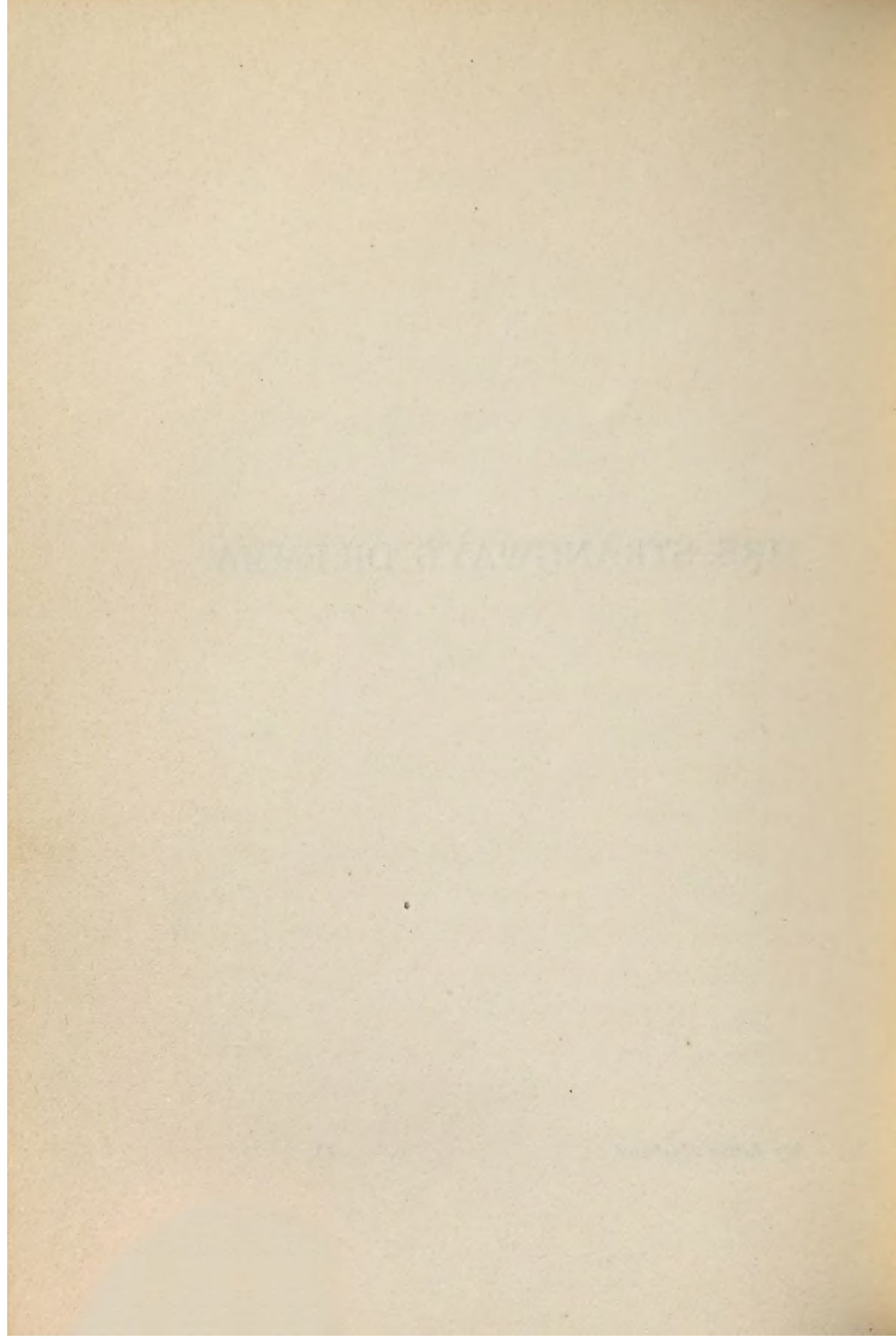
The promise was freely made.

After he had told how the murder had been accomplished, they were both executed in accordance with Russian principles.

When Ivanovitch received the news he had recovered from his illness. He turned very white and staggered for a moment; then he sat down and wrote a letter to his superiors, apologising for the clumsiness with which their orders had been carried out.



MRS. STRANGWAY'S DILEMMA.



MRS. STRANGWAYS'S DILEMMA.

MRS. STRANGWAYS was under a cloud. She had not been exactly cut by Society, but had been perilously near that (to her) very unenviable state of things.

Mrs. Strangways was a widow; and, although she was still on the right side of thirty, had been one for nearly ten years. She was pretty and amusing and fairly well off, and many people wondered why she had not married again. In the early days of her widowhood she had certainly received a good many offers, all of which she had unhesitatingly declined, as, indeed, she would have done now had one of her numerous admirers proposed marriage. Angela Strangways preferred her freedom, and, untrammelled and unfettered, to enjoy her life her own way. This

she had done for many years without scandal and to her own great satisfaction; but the pitcher goes to the well once too often, and a little imprudence committed at Monte Carlo had come to light. This little imprudence had been made very public by one of her dearest friends, who happened to discover it, and, needless to say, that in its passage from one gossip to another it had been so magnified that it now assumed very startling proportions.

Mrs. Strangways, on her return to town in May, found that a great number of her old friends fought shy of her, many invitations that she had hoped for had not been forthcoming, and, amongst others, one that she had set her heart upon, to the dance to be given by the Life Guards (Green).

Now there was a certain Sir Arthur Blyth who was a Captain in the "Greens," and who in the old days had been desperately in love with Mrs. Strangways. That lady had treated him extremely badly, and their acquaintance had long since practically ceased.

Having made up her mind, however, to get a

ticket for the dance, Mrs. Strangways determined to write to Sir Arthur and enlist his services; and this she accordingly did without delay.

"Dear Arthur," she said, "I see that your regiment is giving a ball on Tuesday, to which I have as yet no invitation. I have only just returned from Cannes, where I have had six months of nursing my uncle, whose gout and temper have been worse than ever. Recall to your mind the pleasant days before I was married, and send me a card at once. What have you backed for the Derby? I saw old G—— yesterday; he tells me he is sure to win, and now is the time to get on at a good price." And she wound up by saying that she was "his as ever, Angela Strangways."

She received an answer the next morning from Sir Arthur, who told her plainly that he feared that recalling the old days, in which she had very wisely thrown him over for a richer and, no doubt, a better man, would not enable him to get her an invitation to their ball. They had been out for weeks, he said, and there were no more to be had. He concluded by thanking her for her tip about old G——'s horse, but drew her

attention to the fact that the animal in question had been scratched on the previous day.

Her next application was made to an old lady, the wife of a Canon, who had been a great friend of her mother's. She began by telling her how much she had enjoyed the dear Canon's sermon on the previous Sunday. "I never remember," she said, "to have been so thoroughly edified, so completely, as it were, taken out of myself. What power!" she added, "what eloquence! what beautiful language! and, above all, what charming simplicity!" Was the Canon going to have it published? she asked, and if so, where could she get it? "You must both come to luncheon some day," she went on. "I am also most anxious to meet your son. Is he as clever as his dear father? By the way," she added, "I see that his regiment is going to give a ball next week. Would it be troubling you too much, dear Mrs. Everard, to plead for an invitation for me?"

The result of this communication was no more happy than the last. Mrs. Everard wrote to say that Mrs. Strangways' letter had found her in her husband's sick room, to which he had been con-

fined for the last fortnight with one of his bronchial attacks. She told her that she must have had a very bad place at St. Catherine's to have thought that the Canon was preaching. A new and very raw curate, she said, performed his duties on that day, and she thought his sermon execrable. "I daresay, however," she added, "that when he gets over his nervousness and stammering he may do better." She promised to find out if the young divine in question was going to have his sermon published, but added that she thought it very unlikely. Then she came to the point. "My son has given his invitations to his cousins," she said, "or I am sure he would have been delighted to send you one."

Nothing daunted, Mrs. Strangways next attacked her bosom friend, Lady Louisa Sparkley, who made one of a society of young and fashionable women, who, with blinds drawn down, and lamps lighted, were accustomed to pass their afternoons, and often their evenings, absorbed in the fascinating game of poker. "I want you to come and dine here on Thursday, dearest Loo, for a game of poker afterwards. I have got two delightful *Flats*, fresh from Oxford or somewhere,

who think nothing of seeing a *tenner* in a pair of aces! I won't ask the Duchess, as she really sits too tight for anything. We shall be just four. I see the Greens are giving a ball next week. I wonder if you could get me an invitation from your cousin? I should be so much obliged. *Merci d'avance.*"

But she was no more successful on this occasion, for Lady Louisa wrote to inform her that she was dining with the Duchess on Thursday, "who, *entre parenthèse*," she said, "I don't think sits tighter than other people. I particularly dislike playing with *Flats*, as you call them," she went on; "many thanks all the same." Lady Louisa was afraid that she could not help dearest Angela in reference to the ball. "I haven't got an invitation for myself yet," she said, "and you know, *chacun pour soi, et Dieu pour nous tous.*"

As a last resource Mrs. Strangways thought of Colonel Berkeley, who commanded the Life Guards (Yellow), and who therefore, she imagined, would have no difficulty in getting her a card for the dance of the Life Guards (Green). It was with great reluctance that she approached him, for she had a "Doctor Fell objection" to this warrior, and

had for some years resisted all his attempts to get on more intimate terms. Colonel Berkeley had been most assiduous in his attentions, and had left no stone unturned to achieve his object, but as yet the citadel had not surrendered. On this occasion, however, Mrs. Strangways determined not to stand at a trifle, and she therefore wrote to the Colonel, and told him that she was like Cinderella in the story, and had no invitation to the ball, of all others, to which she wanted to go. "Do be a fairy godmother for once, and send me one. I will promise to leave at twelve, if necessary, to flirt with no prince, nor to leave my slipper behind, or, in fact, do anything that I ought not to do, and shall ever be grateful to you." The most important point, as far, anyhow, as the Colonel was concerned, was, as is usual in ladies' letters, contained in the postscript. "I am always at home after five, but you had better let me know when you are calling."

This was the Forlorn Hope, but forlorn hopes are not usually crowned with success, and this was no exception to the rule. "Why did you not ask me sooner;" asked the Colonel; "I have made inquiries and find that it is now too late, for all

the invitations are out, and the number is strictly limited. Cinderella must forego the ball. But I will come and console her at her *coin de feu* to-morrow after five."

THE
SPARROW IN THE KITCHEN.

THE
KITCHEN IN THE KITCHEN

THE SPARROW IN THE KITCHEN.

BEEFSTEAK-PUDDING with larks is a favourite dish at clubs and at the domestic table, although reasons of high etiquette forbid its appearance when you invite your friends to dinner. Why this should be has never been explained; perhaps "the look of the thing," the pale ungracious aspect of the crust, has something to do with it. Whatever the explanation, the result is, that to the delights of toothsomeness is added a kind of guilty pleasure in the eating of a beefsteak-pudding. Let us, however, dismiss these conventions, and, further, let us take to heart the fact that the sparrow is nearly as good as the lark in beefsteak-pudding. In fact, the sparrow, considered as an edible bird, ranks after the lark

and the ortolan, as the rabbit ranks after the hare. And rabbits too are disgracefully neglected—just as that most excellent fish the herring is—because they are plentiful and cheap.

Many things are necessary for a sparrow-pie; and the chief of these is first to catch your sparrows. The sparrow likes best the neighbourhood of rick yards; and the artfulness and dexterity with which he will hang by his feet, throw the whole weight of his little body on to an ear of wheat, and carry it off, is one of the things that are rarely observed, though they are well worth observing. Naturally he is as unpopular with the farmer as is the barn-rat; and the sparrow-catcher, like the rat-catcher, comes from the towns to exterminate him—being paid, like the wolf-catcher of old times, by the number of heads delivered. Sparrows are much too artful for any trap. It is almost idle to set nooses or lay clap-nets for these birds. The sparrow-catcher's method is known as bat-fowling. For bat-fowling four sportsmen are the proper number. One of these carries a long stick, with which he beats the ivy or the sides of the rick and so starts the game. The second bears a lantern at

the end of a pole; towards the light of which the birds fly when suddenly aroused from sleep. The other two hold, and rattle close against the roosting-haunt of the birds, a wide-mouthed net, made like a shrimping-net, but considerably larger; and into this the sparrows dash, bewildered by the noise and dazzled by the light. Sparrow-catchers need no licence; their gear is cheap; and sparrows in good condition command a very fair price. As the sparrow-catcher is paid by the head, or rather the dozen of heads, you will never find the head of a sparrow in a town pudding.

When the sparrow reaches the London market guile commences. His head is gone already; his feet are now removed, and he does duty for the lark at many a London restaurant and hotel (indeed, in the best of these the lark makes his appearance on your plate with his feet on, so that the long claws may establish his identity). Were we willing to call things by their right names, this deception would be unnecessary. A corn-fed sparrow differs as widely from an insectivorous lark as does a Norfolk turkey from a Scotch capercailzie. Each is excellent in its way;

but they no more resemble each other than does genuine red venison the park-fed fallow-deer. Those who have merely looked at the vignettes in Yarrell can distinguish in a moment between the breastbone of the lark and that of the sparrow. Some sceptics declare that boned larks served as *alouettes en caisse* are nine times out of ten simply sparrows, the whiteness of whose flesh is concealed by highly coloured gravy.

But there are other ways of cooking a sparrow than to boil him with beefsteak under crust; and in every way he repays the trouble of the cook. Roll a piece of bacon over his breast (not too large a piece) toast him in a Dutch oven, and so serve him hot. School-boys know this, although they are often obliged to dispense with the bacon. Or, "another way". Curry a dozen sparrows and serve them with the proper gravy in a rampart of rice. In fact, when you have once understood how dainty a bird a well-fed sparrow is, a dozen worthy modes of presenting him at table will occur to you. Has not a book been written detailing a hundred methods of cooking the potato?

One way may be recommended as excellent. Cut enough off the end of a large potato to enable

you to scoop a receptacle for your sparrow. Place him therein, as Izaak Walton said, "tenderly", with appropriate adjuncts to your taste. Lute on the head of your potato again with flour-and-water. Use your judgment as to time of serving, and his baked potato will astonish your guest. Nor need the humanitarian be aggrieved at all this good advice, nor argue about the number of lives that have to be sacrificed for a single pudding. The sparrow is not easy of extermination, as the good people of Australia have discovered. You might as well talk of over-shrimping Pegwell Bay as of over-bat-fowling English rick-yards. Nor has the sparrow, like the quail, to be kept in a dungeon and stuffed with millet until he is quite uncomfortable. Scholars of the Paul Rondolet type, should they be disposed to think of Lesbia's sparrow and therefore hesitate as to a sparrow-pudding, may take comfort from the thought that the pet of Lesbia was certainly not our own *passer domesticus*, inasmuch as it used to flutter round her head, peck playfully at her finger, and twitter a welcome to her. The bird in question was probably a goldfinch, a red-pole, a siskin. The Romans applied the term

passer to all small birds indiscriminately. Anyhow, there is very little of romance about a full-fed cock-sparrow captured during his winter season among the corn-ricks.

AN
ANGLER'S DAY ON THE CANAL.

AN
ADDRESS DELIVERED BY
JAMES W. WALKER

AN
ANGLER'S DAY ON THE CANAL.

ABOUT a mile out of the old town is a range of wharves with sheds and warehouses on them. From these the canal runs away to a distance beyond the reach of schoolboy imagination. Some big fellows in the sixth form declare that if you had a boat you could row in it the whole way to London, but that you would have to pass an almost infinite number of locks. There are no boats on the canal, however, except one or two which belong to the coal wharf; so that this weighty problem has never been solved. The canal itself is not selected by the boys for bathing purposes, the water being dirty and the bottom muddy. They prefer to take their plunge in the river, which is bright, clear, and full of trout. They may not, however, capture these trout, for

the river is strictly preserved. So they console themselves by fishing in the canal, where they spend many most pleasant summer afternoons and even days upon the bank; and are not at all troubled by the passing bargemen, who look on them good-naturedly as being hardly worthy of even their lighter humour. The barges are not frequent; but the passing of a barge is an event, for it stirs up the water, and the fish bite after its departure. There are but three kinds of fish in the canal, and none of them run to any very great size. They are the eel, the perch, and the rudd—a sort of genus of the roach, so muddy in flavour that even cats turn up their noses at its flesh. If in the course of the year a perch is caught that turns the scale at a quarter of a pound, it is shown all over the town as a trophy. The eels are small and of fairly good flavour. Tradition asserts that they reach fabulous dimensions; but this, like most tradition, lacks substantive confirmation.

The schoolboy mode of fishing in the canal is simple. You take with you one or two or more two-jointed hazel-rods, which cost from sixpence to a shilling each. Running-tackle is wholly

unnecessary; but, if your pocket-money permits it, your own personal rod enjoys a small winch and is of hickory, with two or more joints. For bait you take wasp-grub, if it is the season; and if it is not, then red and white paste. This is for the rudd. The eels like half a lob-worm or a dead minnow or stone-loach. You lead your eel-line and peg it down; but put no float to it. Your personal rod will probably be devoted to the perch, who are game and numerous although small. Having chosen your pitch with your two or three companions, it does not take you long to get to work, and if you have a fair supply of bait—which ought not to be at all difficult—you will soon begin to enjoy very reasonable sport. The canal swarms with fish, and from four to six or even to ten pounds is not a very unusual take for a schoolboy who has not been up the night before armed with a big basket of ground-bait. There are wily old sportsmen in the town—why is it, by the way, that shoemakers are always such inveterate anglers?—who send an emissary up over night to ground-bait their pitch, or even go themselves in the shades of the evening, and who have their reward.

Under any circumstances the sport is brisk; and you will, if you are wise, content yourself with one line at the bottom for eels, one rod for perch, and another for rudd; while your own rod will be baited for either rudd or perch, according to the indications given in the first quarter of an hour. The rods that fish for themselves must, of course, be supported by a little crutch, which can be cut on the spot, and have some simple substitute for a ferrule at the butt. If your pitch is well chosen, and especially if the day is favourable, you will not have long to wait for your sport, such as it is; and many people thoroughly acquainted with both prefer canal-fishing to even the capture of the gudgeon, as being more placid and Arcadian, and with more of really quiet enjoyment in it.

A thorough fisherman who loves his sport for its own sake will not regret a day or two on the old canal as wasted. There is none of the excitement and friction involved in a day's fishing on the Thames, or any other such noted resort. You must take all your baggage with you, and you will probably even bring your own dinner, unless you are bigger and better blessed with

worldly means than the ordinary schoolboy, and can have lunch brought for you from the nearest inn. Thus provided for, the day will pass so quietly and pleasantly that it will jar upon you to notice the shadows lengthening, the white moths beginning to show themselves, and the grass becoming damp with dew. The true time at which enthusiasts declare you should close for the day is as soon as you can see the mist on the surface of the meadows upon the opposite bank. If you stay longer you risk face-ache if a schoolboy, and things worse than face-ache if of years more mature.

It is time to go home. The rods are soon tied together. The remainder of the bait, if you are wise, will be thrown in together with all fragments of your meal. You may possibly return to-morrow. The trudge home, unless you are luxurious and prefer to drive, will freshen your joints after a day on the bank; and to a true angler the journey home, with its occasional stoppages, is as pleasant a part of the day as any other, and is wonderfully soothing in its general effect. Schoolboys always sleep soundly; but you need not be a schoolboy to enjoy your supper

and your bed after a day on the banks of the canal. Nor, although long past your Latin grammar, need you be ashamed of a day which has been so simply, so healthily, and so pleasantly idled away.

VEGETARIANISM.

RECEIVED

VEGETARIANISM.

No sensible person, of course, advocates absolute vegetarianism in temperate climates. It is true that a horse fed upon grasses, green and dried, and green vetches and dried seeds, can evolve from that diet muscles and bones of the most perfect substance. But it does not follow that a man can do the same, or, at any rate, that the bulk of men can. The teeth of a man alone are an answer to the question what kind of food he ought to eat, and other anatomical and physiological considerations point in the same direction. Even in the hottest countries man is the better for a small allowance of meat, and, if it is possible, a more liberal quantity of fresh fish. It is true, no doubt, that a man can be kept alive for a considerable number of years upon bread

and water, but he will not be the better for the process, and his life will certainly be shortened by it. The Brahmins, who, if orthodox, are strict vegetarians, enjoy an exceptional climate, and no doubt have become hereditarily accustomed to abstinence from flesh; but they are neither exceptionally healthy nor exceptionally long-lived, and their physique is far below the average. In England we have almost settled the question scientifically by adjustment and re-adjustment of prison diet until we have brought the rations to a minimum. Convicts undergoing penal servitude have a sufficient allowance of meat. For prisoners undergoing hard labour the allowance is the absolute minimum; and it is an ascertained fact that two years hard labour will injure for life the healthiest and strongest man, and that three years would almost certainly kill him. We may start from these facts as being beyond dispute.

On the other hand, it is certain that in excessively hot weather, very little meat is required, and that a multiplicity of fruit and vegetables is both pleasant and wholesome. Partial vegetarianism is growing in England, although until

of late its growth has been very gradual. Our grandfathers lived to a great extent on roast meat and potatoes, and boiled meat with the "usual trimmings" of carrots and turnips. But no ordinary house in those days had a cook who could make a purée of sorrel; and often vegetables which are now ordinary in all households except those of the working classes—asparagus, the green and the Jerusalem artichoke, spinach, vegetable-marrow, sea-kale, and salsifi—were unknown. In these days a competent plain cook can dress every kind of vegetable sufficiently well.

There are some vegetables which contain a large amount of nitrogen, and on which, if animal or vegetable fats be added, together with milk, cheese, and brown bread, a man can in warm weather get through hard bodily work and even put on muscle; although he will always be the better for a little meat and fish. Highest among nitrogenous vegetables rank garlic and onions of all kinds, and the seeds as distinguished from the husks of the various beans.

The Egyptian lentil is becoming deservedly popular; and there are two solutions of the

enigma why Pythagoras, the vegetarian, forbade his pupils to eat beans. Some hold that a bean bears an external resemblance to a kidney, and was so placed under interdict; but others incline to the belief that, as a vegetarian of the strictest sect, the Greek philosopher found beans too stimulating a diet. At the other end of the scale come watery vegetables (such as the various gourds) and starchy vegetables (such as rice and potatoes). Not even a child could long be kept alive on boiled rice without any such additions as milk, or custard, or gravy. We may leave, however, these broad considerations to writers upon dietetics. We simply wish to point out that, in hot weather or a hot climate, we want and are the better for less meat and more vegetables. This our own instinct seems to tell us. Nor would it, indeed, be at all amiss in the hottest weather to have a strict fast—in the sense of abstinence from flesh—for two or even three days a week. On days when the temperature is extreme, a dinner of fish and eggs upon toast or spinach, with custards, cheese and plenty of vegetables, is all that is really wanted by a strong man of thirty who is taking vigorous exercise. If a man

tells you that in such weather he must have a mutton-chop for his breakfast or a couple, and a big beef-steak or its equivalent for his dinner, with cold meat at lunch and supper, he is talking out of affectation. He might as well say that he always did his work upon undiluted brandy. The late Mr. Brassey no doubt ascertained pretty accurately that the amount of work to be got out of a navigator or dock-labourer depends entirely upon the amount of beef you put into him. But an ordinary professional man—or, indeed, any man who is not engaged in severe bodily exercise—does not, even in winter, require meat upon this kind of calculation, and would indeed, be the worse for it.

There are many ways of cooking vegetables in which they are partially mixed, or at any rate flavoured, with meat or the equivalent of meat. Minced mutton surrounded by a rampart of rice or mashed potatoes to the amount of its own weight is an extreme instance. Lobster salad with plenty of lobster in it is another. The French in summer-time are very fond of minute mutton cutlets literally smothered in a profuse variety of vegetables. So we can gradually taper away the pro-

portion of animal ingredients until we come to vegetables stewed in gravy, than which nothing is more delicious. The number of combinations which a good cook can make is marvellous. The various modes, indeed, of preparing potatoes, tomatoes, and vegetable-marrows are almost infinite. We usually boil our vegetable-marrow and serve it with melted-butter, but we can treat it with more respect than this: we can stew it in thick gravy, or we can stuff it with forcemeat and bake it. In Devonshire there is a semi-vegetarian dish called squab-pie, which will soon overcome the original prejudices of those who can persuade themselves to make trial of it. It is a pie or pudding composed of small cutlets of mutton or pork to which, in warm weather, is added far more than their bulk of sliced apples and potatoes. We might spin out the list of dishes for ever. One of the pleasantest is the "frittura". Little pieces of meat the size of a two-shilling piece, together with scraps of vegetables of every kind, are dipped into boiling oil and served up hot and hot; or, in other words, the cook must keep on his frying while the meal is being eaten, for "frittura" loses its crispness almost immediately. "Frittura" is rare

in an English house, but can be got at most Italian houses; which are also the best places at which to find those strictly vegetarian dishes, macaroni *au gratin* and macaroni with tomatoes. Indeed, a volume equal in bulk to Mr. Hayward's "Art of Dining" could be written on the preparation of vegetables raw and cooked.

If all this seems vague, it is not difficult to supplement it by the suggestion of a semi-vegetarian dinner for a really hot day—not a simple family dinner nor an ornate banquet, but one to which you might ask a friend or a few friends with confidence. Olives, radishes, anchovies, *julienne* soup, boiled turbot, eel stewed with veal stuffing *à la* Isaac Walton, tomatoes *au gratin*, stuffed vegetable-marrow, *purée* of lentils, *fricandeau* of veal upon sorrel, new potatoes, green peas, quail, white haricots in curry, macaroni boiled in milk and served with grated Parmesan, lobster salad, salad of cold vegetables, fruit tarts and custards, blanc-mange, cheese wafers, dessert. After such a dinner as this a man would feel thoroughly satisfied and yet not in any way weighted by his meal. It could, of course, be simplified, and it could very easily be altered or augmented. Some people

are particularly fond of a Russian salad; others in hot weather like a *macédoine*; others swear by boiled fowl; others by curries. But it can at least be claimed for the *menu* just given that it is hospitable, varied, extremely wholesome, and contains almost a minimum of animal food.

W I N T E R D R I N K S.

WINTER DRINKS.

MOST people are familiar with cooling drinks—the beverages hospitably proffered in double-handled tankards, carefully swathed in a napkin. Every young lady who has been to Lord's, or to Montem at Eton, or to Commemoration at Oxford or even to Henley Regatta, knows all about claret-cup and champagne-cup and cider-cup. She knows all, that is to say, except how to mix these compounds. But, as compared with summer drinks, a winter drink is a work of art. All you need in a summer drink is that it should cool you. One of the best summer drinks in the world is an ordinary lemon ice well stirred and dissolved in a bottle of soda-water. A winter drink is more than this. When the Cyclops in the *Odyssey* praises Ulysses for his skill as a butler, he vows that the beverage offered him has been "a gulp of nectar and ambrosia." Winter

drinks must always contain ambrosia, unless the drinker has been for hours in an artificial atmosphere.

The type of a winter drink for men who are doing hard work—wild-fowling in a flat-bottomed boat, or at sea with icicles in the rigging—is egg-flip. Doctors differ, but egg-flip should be more or less made after this fashion. You beat up the yolks and whites of eggs into a sort of custard. In a saucepan you heat beer with a moderate allowance of gin. Old ale that has become hard is the beer for choice. Then, before the beer boils or even simmers, you pour in the custard, whipping the mixture the whole time so that the whites of the eggs shall not coagulate. You then—and this is a secret of the art—whip in and whip up some ground loaf-sugar, which brings a thick rich foam to the surface. The resultant compound should have the consistency of cream, and may be safely drunk out of a tumbler, which should first be warmed. A pint of egg-flip is a meal. It will carry a duck-shooter on the fens for twelve hours, especially if he assists it with a good solid biscuit.

Another very “staying” compound is the

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famous "hot egg-nogg." Among various recipes for the concoction of this beverage, Mr. Engel's is the best. That pastmaster in the art of brewing drinks tells us to take a table-spoonful of fine sugar dissolved in a table-spoonful of water, one egg, a wine-glass of cognac, half a wine-glass of Santa Cruz or Jamaica rum, a quarter of a tumbler of boiling water, and to fill up with milk; then we are to shake the ingredients until they are thoroughly mixed, and then to grate a little nutmeg on the top. Perhaps the most favourite winter drink in England is warm punch; and this is Mr. Engel's advice as to its brewing:—"The great secret," he tells us, "in punch-brewing is to make the mixture sweet and strong, using tea instead of water, and so thoroughly amalgamating all the compounds that the taste of neither the bitter, the sweet, the spirit, nor the element shall be perceptible one over the other. With hot punch the spirits should be put in before the water." The most popular American winter drink is called Tom and Jerry. To fill an ordinary punch-bowl with this mixture, take 5 lb. of powdered sugar, twelve eggs, half a wine-glass of Jamaica rum, one and a half tea-spoonful of

ground cinnamon, half a tea-spoonful of ground cloves, and half a tea-spoonful of allspice. Beat the white of the eggs to a stiff froth, and the yolks until they are as thin as water; then mix together and add spice and rum. Thicken with sugar until the mixture attains the consistency of a light batter. Then take a tumbler, and to one table-spoonful of this compound add a wine-glass of brandy and fill the glass with boiling water; stir with a spoon, and grate a little nutmeg on the top.

There are winter drinks that are fanciful, fashionable, and practically useless. You might almost begin the recipe for each with the old formula, "Catch the flavour of a quarter of a pound of green tea." Port-wine negus is one of these. Young girls are laid up with bronchitis after a ball, and are then scolded for dancing too much and afterwards sitting in a draught. Take cheap port-wine, largely fortified; mix it with a more than corresponding bulk of hot water: add sugar and grated nutmeg, and you have the ordinary port-wine negus. A healthy man might drink the sickly compound from a tankard. In a young, and especially in a delicate, girl the immediate exhilaration it produces is

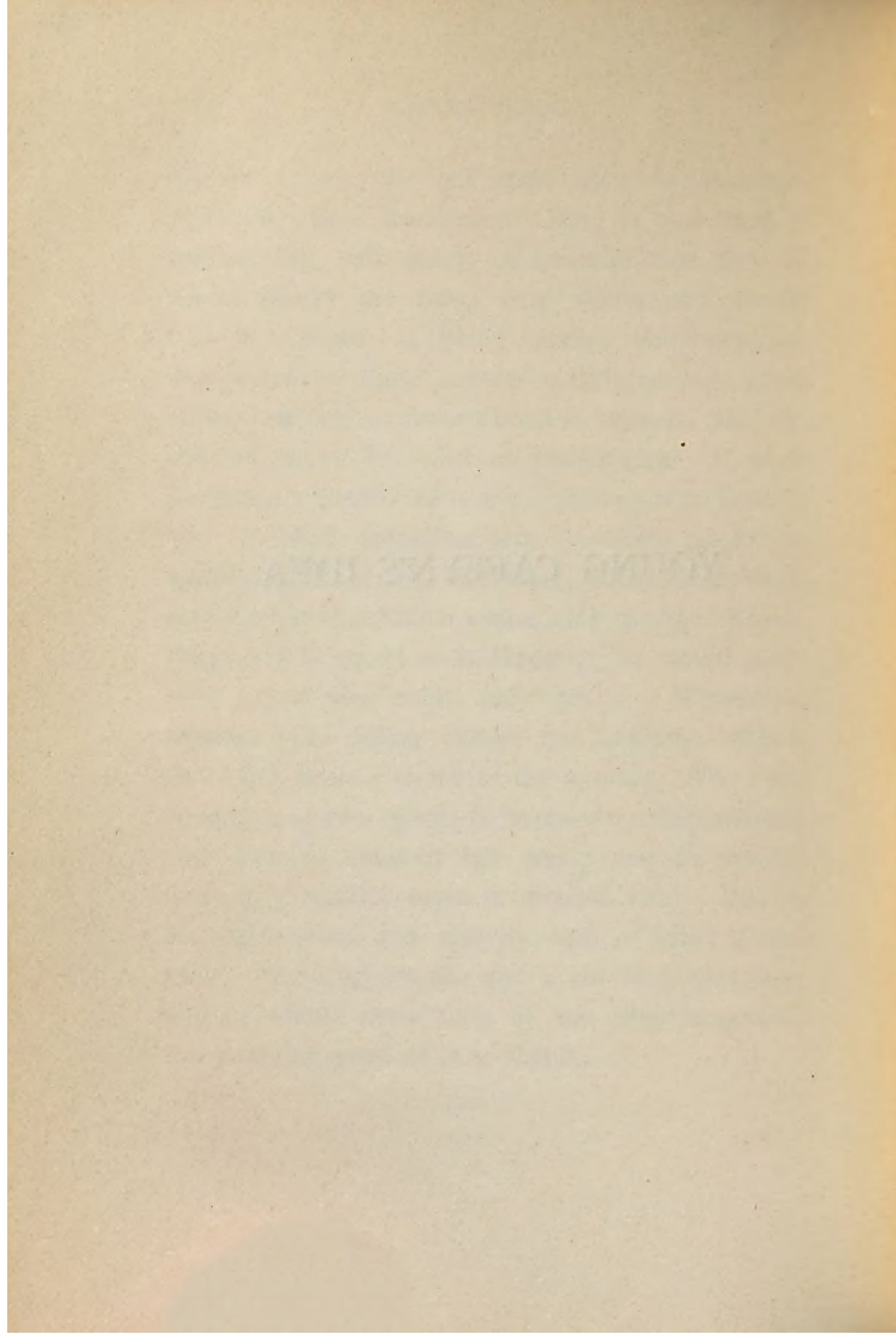
followed by a chill. For a drink in winter must do more than warm you, else it will merely produce what may roughly be termed a perspiration, in the relapse from which it leaves the body in no condition to withstand the external temperature.

There are some winter drinks for men which act immediately as a strong stimulant, forcing the heart into action, and so securing an instantaneous if temporary recovery from the effects of cold, or indeed of any violent shock to the system. Of these the number is very large; and the efficacy of each will be all the more potent if it is one to which the patient is not accustomed. A man tumbles through the ice: they fish him out and give him half a tumbler of hot brandy-and-water. He is so accustomed to this dose that it has practically no effect. You might almost as well offer him a bottle of ginger-beer. But a glass of rum without water will promptly send the blood coursing gaily through his veins. There are occasions when a few grains of Cayenne pepper may be advantageously mixed with the rum.

The best rule for winter drinks with your meals is that they should be much the same as those in which you indulge during the summer.

For in winter you eat more than in summer, especially more flesh-meat. But, if you lead a healthy life, with plenty of exercise, the best of winter drinks are those from which you would turn in summer as being heavy. And perhaps the prince of these among malt-liquors is good Burton ale, or, as tavern-keepers term it, old ale. It is an ale to be taken in moderation. If wine is taken, it should be a wine analogous to Burton ale: in small quantities too. A book might be written on the merits of Tokay, White Hermitage, and the stronger Italian wines, such as Capri Rosso. Burgundy is good; so is Madeira; so would port-wine be if you could only get it. Winter or summer, all violent drinks are noxious, unless there has been a shock to the system. The consumption of raw spirits is barbarous: they neither cool you in summer nor warm you in winter. Only in a limited sense is alcohol food. But at the right times and seasons, and in small quantities, it is a wholesome and a cheering stimulus; and in winter more than in any other season of the year the good of it is found.

YOUNG CAFFYN'S IDEA.



YOUNG CAFFYN'S IDEA.

MR. SIDNEY CAFFYN, barrister-at-law, was smoking a cigar in chambers in Pump Court, and waiting for his first brief. He had been engaged in the same occupation, with occasional variations in the shape of pipe and cigarette, for twelve months. He was not an altogether amiable young man, Mr. Caffyn, not an unselfish man, or he would never have been where he was; but to his own mind he was as full of fine qualities and magnanimous intentions as any high-souled hero of romance. From which we may infer that, if no man is a hero to his valet, most of us are heroes to ourselves.

Mr. Caffyn, senior, had left two children, and the sum of twelve hundred pounds, less the expenses of his funeral. The elder of the orphans

was the gentleman who still waited for solicitors, an unobservant race, to discover his abilities; the younger was a girl, plain but good-hearted, who had readily agreed to her brother choosing an unsuitable profession, and spending money which might have been very much better employed in qualifying himself for it.

"I am not a business man," Sidney had declared. "I have no tendency towards commerce; for me to take a berth in the City would be sheer waste of time, for I should never rise above a clerkship to the end of my days. No, my dear Marion; with our twelve hundred pounds I can not only pay my fees, but, with economy, we can live together in lodgings until I am in receipt of an income. I shall go to the Bar."

Marion had responded: "Do, dear Sidney. Of course, you are right." And though she was far less sure of the fact to-day, to her credit be it said, she had never put her doubt into words.

Mr. Caffyn finished his cigar, and threw the stump with an impatient gesture into the fireplace. He was reflecting what an undeserved misfortune it was for an engaged man to have a sister to support. By falling in love while he was still

waiting to be called, Mr. Caffyn had complicated his position still further, and, though he had concealed the imprudence as long as he could, the truth had recently reached Miss Marion's ears.

It had leaked out at a stage when their capital was almost exhausted, and there had been the nearest approach to a scene that had ever occurred between them. Marion had told him that his obvious duty was to break off the engagement, and to write to a half-brother of their late father avowing their position. "You are very clever, dear, and I am certain you will do great things by-and-by," she had added; "but in the meanwhile a sum of money is most necessary to both of us. Our father helped Uncle Alfred much in their young days. I am sure, if you put the situation in the right light, some return would be made to us, and gladly too."

Alfred Caffyn had for many years been in business in the United States, and was supposed to be doing well. Sidney, after much demur, wrote as advised. He declined to break off his engagement, but in his letter to his relative he avoided mentioning it; he had enough wisdom for that. He explained that his sister was wholly

dependent on his exertions, which was not literally true, as she had taken to writing a little; he said that as a young professional man his income was very slight, and he requested a loan large enough to defray their joint expenses for a couple of years.

This had happened six weeks ago, and so far no answer had been received. In the meantime the banking account had been reduced still more, and the prospect of his marriage was no further advanced. Mr. Caffyn's gloom, it will be seen, had some excuse.

While he sat staring at the cigar-stump, still smouldering in the fender, and anathematising himself for having waived his dignity for nothing, there came a sharp rat-tat at the door.

He rose, and perceived the moment his eyes fell on the envelope that the long-expected reply had arrived at last.

His face paled a little as he tore it open. There was a draft enclosed, and his fingers were tremulous as he unfolded it. The amount was fifty pounds. He stifled a groan of disappointment, and turned to the closely-written

sheets. When he had read them through, his face was paler still, and for some minutes he sat plunged in thought. Then he smothered an exclamation of dismay and read them through again, more attentively, and with increased disgust.

The letter was not from Mr. Alfred Caffyn, but from his younger brother Stephen, of whom Sidney had heard far less. The gentleman wrote that the delay in answering was due to the consideration that both he and his brother had thought it desirable to give the matter before expressing any decided opinion upon it. The opinion they had now come to was that Sidney was wasting his time as he was, and that he would do much better to devote his mind to business, and to go out with the idea of making a fortune in trade in the United States. "Your Uncle Alfred and I," the letter went on, "are not in partnership; and I, as a bachelor, may perhaps be able to assist you in your new career more than he. As an example of what a poor man with energy and perseverance may accomplish by middle age in this country, I would cite myself, and I strongly advise you to discard your profession without loss of time, and to turn your

thoughts in a more practical direction. You may then hope to remit weekly out of your salary to your sister, and by degrees to acquire an independence—a thing I cannot think likely to happen to you in Old England. I enclose a draft for fifty pounds, intended for your passage. Should you decide to remain in London, however, you will use the money for other purposes, but neither your Uncle Alfred nor I will think that you act wisely by doing so.”

Mr. Caffyn crushed the communication into his pocket. Then he picked up his hat and went to consult Miss Stella Cunninghame, the lady to whom he was affianced.

“What shall I do?” he demanded. “What do you think about it?”

“I should go,” said Miss Cunninghame.

“Give up my profession!” He had wanted her to say “Remain.”

“In a year or so we might be able to marry,” she murmured.

“But to throw up my chances of making a name!”

“Of course,” she said, “there *is* the sacrifice.”

She thought him rather selfish, and her tone was cooler.

"Would you be satisfied to live in America?" he asked.

"With you?"

"With me, of course," said Sidney. "What else are we talking about?"

"Yes," said Stella, "I should be quite satisfied. But don't consider me alone in the matter: you must think of yourself."

"I am," he said, truthfully. "Well, we can discuss the subject again, and arrive at a conclusion later. There is no need for hurry, anyhow."

She was very pretty, and a little of a lover's ardour flared into his next speech.

"You know I'd do anything on earth to get you, Stella," he exclaimed. "If I could see my way to marrying you in a year, as you say, I'd go like a shot! The trouble is——"

"*What* is the trouble?" she inquired.

"Well," he confessed, "they—you see, they might lose their interest in me if I proposed to marry just when they are starting me in the world, as it were. They might think I had no right—

you know what I mean. If I go out there, into some detestable office, and then find myself as far from making you my wife as I am now, I might to all intents and purposes just as well stay where I am. I should have made the sacrifice for nothing."

"If you can afford it," she said; "if your salary is large enough you can surely do as you like with it."

"Old men are so funny," he returned, "so odd." He did not care to tell her that his sister depended on him so greatly, and that his uncles would most certainly remind him of her claim. "Old men are so funny," he repeated, "and I should be bound to humour their crotchets, you see. I really consider that if I do throw up the Bar and go out there, I am making a speculation. If it comes off, of course I shall have advanced our marriage by several years; but if it doesn't, why, I shall always reproach myself for abandoning the slow-and-sure means here. Do you think your mother would object to your living in the States?"

Miss Cunningham shook her head.

"My mother would be too glad to see us

married to put obstacles of any kind in our path, I am sure," she answered. "Her health is so precarious, you know, and our means——"

"Yes," he said, "yes, I suppose she would consent. Well, dearest, I'll go home and smoke a pipe on it. We'll send a reply disposing of the matter one way or the other by next mail. Kiss me!"

So she kissed him, and he went back to the Bayswater lodging debating what he should do.

There were two women to advise him to accept the offer—even to describe it as "the chance of his life"—and his irresolution ended by his deciding to proceed to the States forthwith. He was unpleasantly conscious that he was expected to leave a goodly part of the fifty pounds with Marion, so he actually did leave her a ten-pound note, reminding her that with this, their minute balance, and her literary earnings, she would be provided for in a cheap boarding-house for the next three months and more.

He booked his passage, and ordered certain things which seemed indispensable—clothes, he had heard, were dear in America, and it was an excellent excuse for the extravagance—and gave

himself and Miss Cunninghame a little dinner up West, designed as a kind of funeral oration over his dead career. He was firmly convinced that he was making the greatest sacrifice that ever was laid on the altar of Hymen yet, and when at length he stood on board the *Germanic* and watched the landing stage getting smaller, and the frontage of Liverpool fading into a distant smear, there was a feeling of Childe-Harold-melancholy in his breast that sent him towards the saloon bar with unsteady legs. Mr. Stephen Caffyn resided in Buffalo, and after twenty-four hours in New York, to see what it was like, Sidney accordingly went on there.

The luxury in which he travelled—for they are certainly ahead of us in the matter of trains across the Atlantic—disposed him to view things *couleur de rose* when Buffalo was reached, and stepping down on to the platform he made his way towards the address from which his uncle had written.

He was wholly ignorant of the nature of his relative's business, and it was with a sensation of blank dismay that, on reaching his destination, he saw the name of "Caffyn" painted over the

windows of what we should call a linen-draper's establishment. So aghast was he by this revelation that he found it impossible to present himself at once.

He retraced his steps until he came to an hotel, where, taking a seat in the hall, he solemnly ruminated for half an hour.

He had been prepared for the conventional office, where the routine would be unpleasant but "gentlemanly"; it was suddenly displayed to his perception that the American sees nothing to be ashamed of in keeping a shop. If it had not been too late, Mr. Sidney Caffyn would have declined to participate in such dishonour with scorn and indignation.

But the time for that had passed. He got up heavily, and slowly returned to the detested door. It was a large shop: there were a score or more assistants behind the counters on the ground floor, and in reply to his inquiry, one of these salesmen "guessed" that Mr. Caffyn was in the carpet warehouse upstairs.

Sidney ascended the staircase to ascertain. A big, good-humoured man, in his shirt-sleeves, was inspecting some samples of carpets which a

commercial traveller was unrolling, and, assuming him to be the manager, Sidney repeated his question to him.

"Can you tell me where Mr. Caffyn is?" he said.

"Yes, sir, I'm Mr. Caffyn," returned the other, "what can I do for you?"

"I'm your nephew," said Sidney, weakly. And then his hand was gripped in a monster clasp, and the introduction was accomplished.

"Is that so!" said the big man, genially. "You're my nephew, eh? Well, well, and you're going to try your hand at trade?"

"Yes," said Sidney, faintly, "I—eh—I've taken your advice, you see. I'm glad you think I have done well." His eyes roved round the shelves and fixed themselves in depression on the samples still unrolled. "It'll be a change," he added, "it will be a great change for me!"

"Make a man of you!" said his uncle, heartily. "Put the dollars in your pockets, and make a man of you. Europe's played out—this is the country for a young fellow to get on in. I had nothing when I came here, and look at me now!"

In truth, it was a sufficiently pleasant coun-

tenance to look at. Forty-five years or so of life had not lined it very deeply, or done more than grizzle the close-cropped beard, and the eyes were at once gentle and shrewd.

Sidney mentally questioned whether he was going to be offered a partnership, but nothing definite concerning his prospects was said during the conversation, and when he turned into bed that night, his uncle's intentions on his behalf were a sealed book still.

Mr. Stephen Caffyn lived in the house of his brother and sister-in-law, and it was there that Sidney found temporary quarters. He had nothing to complain of in the reception accorded him by any of his relations, and within a week of his arrival he felt himself perfectly at home.

It was when he had been there a week that the subject upon which he had been so anxious was broached. Stephen Caffyn offered him the post of book-keeper at a salary of twenty dollars a week.

"You must be content to work yourself up," he said, when Sidney's jaw dropped. "With twenty dollars a week you can keep yourself in a boarding-house in the city, and remit seven or

eight dollars a week to your sister. Many a young fellow would jump at such an opening—and young fellows with business experience too.”

The ex-barrister-at-law found it objectionable to be referred to as a “young fellow.”

“I had other views,” he said; “it is a poor prospect for me.”

His uncle regarded him dubiously.

“What did you look for, sonny?” he asked.

“I scarcely looked to give up a profession,” said Sidney, “and to take a situation in a sh—er—in a house of business with so small an inducement as twenty dollars a week.”

“How many dollars a week did your profession bring in?” said Stephen Caffyn, calmly.

This was not an inquiry calculated to advance Sidney's argument, and he temporised.

“Of course,” he said, “you know best how much I am worth to you. If that is the most you can offer me I shall not refuse it; on the contrary, I shall accept it, and simply hope to do better things in time.”

He received a smack on the back.

“Put your shoulder to the wheel, and you'll make a fortune before you die, the same as I

have done," he was assured. And remember, you've got a sister at home to work for, and that a man with a girl depending on him, mustn't be too particular as to what work he does! Let's have a cocktail."

Sidney groaned in his soul, and wondered what this American uncle would say if he suspected he was engaged.

He removed, as suggested, to a boarding-house, and he went to the dry-goods store daily from nine o'clock till six. But the boarding-house was dearer than he had been led to expect, and the evenings, moreover, were long without amusement. He did not care to go to his relations too frequently, and he went, instead, into billiard saloons, and to the theatre once or twice a week. His salary, under these conditions, seldom permitted him to remit to England, and Stephen Caffyn discovering the fact from his casual admissions, was troubled. He was troubled about the disposition of the young man, from whom he had hoped great things, and also on the score of the niece in England whom he had not seen.

One day when Sidney was biting his pen in his office, and thinking of Stella, with whom mar-

riage seemed, if anything, further off than ever, Stephen made a proposal to him.

"I have been talking things over with my brother," he remarked, "and we both think that your sister must be very lonely in London, living by herself. We advise you to write her to join you."

Sidney stared.

"With an increase of ten dollars a week on your salary," pursued the elder man, "you would both be able to live quite comfortably here. Here is a draft for her travelling expenses; send it by the next mail, and tell her to come."

"You are awfully good," said Sidney; "I will!"

That night he sat meditating in his room, and wrestling with a startling temptation.

It had struck him how easy it would be to send the draft to Stella, and to bring *her* here instead. It seemed to him that they might marry in New York when he went down to meet the boat, and that he could live with his wife in Buffalo instead of his sister.

Stephen never went to his place to see him—he had no visitors whatever; and when he and Stella went to visit Stephen, why, Stella would be called "Marion," and that was all about it.

It was a reckless, desperate, harebrained notion, but it fastened on him, and would not be postponed till they met—she was as sharp as a needle—and he need have no fear of her betraying the deception by any mistake. All that was necessary for him to do by mail was to send the bill of exchange, and bid her start. When Mr. Stephen Caffyn's draft left Buffalo it was enclosed in a love letter, and addressed to Miss Stella Cunningham, 92½, Torrington Crescent, London.

For eight days Sidney moved about in a sort of trance, waiting for his *fiancée's* reply, which he had begged her to dispatch by cable. On the eighth it came, and informed him she would leave for New York the week following by the White Star boat *Majestic*. The die was now cast. He told his uncle that Marion had arranged to join him, and expressed a wish, which was applauded, to meet her in New York when she arrived.

It was on the date fixed for Miss Cunningham's departure that Mr. Sidney found himself unable to attend to business by reason of a severe attack of Russian influenza.

He was confined to his bed, and a doctor had to be called in. The patient's feverish anxiety

to leave for New York at all hazards a few days after did not tend to accelerate his recovery. The morning before the one on which it was essential he should start, the doctor distinctly forbade him to leave the house for at least a week.

"I," said his uncle Stephen, who had taken to looking in upon him during his indisposition, "I will go in your place, my boy—don't worry!"

Sidney stifled his feelings, and fought to obtain his way. His entreaties and declarations were all unavailing, however, and, since his uncle had so kindly offered to act as his deputy, there appeared, besides, no reason for him to insist. There was nothing for it but to let the other go, and to defer the wedding until the trip which he would arrange in his "sister's" company upon his convalescence.

He wrote, not without considerable difficulty, owing to his pains and his excitement, a brief caution to Stella for his uncle to deliver. He told her what he had done, and impressed upon her the vital importance of her pretending to be the person she was not. To his uncle himself he insisted, with all the vehemence the influenza had left possible, that the missive was to be

handed to the young lady at the very instant of greeting. When he had done all this, he recollected with a ghastly shock that Stephen would ask for her as "Miss Caffyn," and be told that there was no such passenger on the ship.

He broke out into a cold perspiration, and lay quaking. Then he had an inspiration, and prayed to his lucky star that it might prove practicable. Among his possessions was a large photograph of Stella, with "yours always" and many endearing additions at the back. He devoted an hour to carefully erasing this inscription, and, when his uncle next appeared, showed it to him as the likeness of his sister.

"You will probably watch the people as they come down the gangway in the Custom House," he said; "if you study this likeness you will recognise her at once. I want you, I may say I beg of you, to give my note to her before you speak at all, or she may think you have come to tell her I am dead; or goodness knows what. She will know my writing immediately"—he now remembered a horrible difficulty in the way of addressing the letter, and quaked again. "I will even begin my message to her outside the

envelope," he continued, recovering himself. "I will say: 'The enclosed to explain why I'm prevented meeting you—Sidney.' That will allay her fears directly."

Mr. Caffyn, who thought him fidgetty even for a sick man, promised his instructions should be obeyed.

"I shall certainly know her at once," he added; "she has so distinctive a face. You do not resemble her, Sidney."

"Ah!" said Sidney; "you think not? Er—er—we have often been considered much alike."

Stephen got into the city of New York the morning before the *Majestic* was due, and by inquiry at the shipping office learnt the time that she was expected was about noon. At noon accordingly next day he formed one of the attendant crowd upon the pier. The boat was late, indeed it was past three o'clock when the passengers and luggage commenced to fill the huge shed wherein he waited. They came in—the passengers—one by one, and Stephen, standing beside the narrow gangway, scrutinised the faces as they approached him.

Almost the last to appear was a girl, whom he

immediately recognised from her portrait. As she reached the ground he was beside her in a moment.

"Miss Caffyn," he said.

The girl, taken by surprise, turned and hesitated.

"Caffyn?" she repeated, questioningly.

"I have a note to you from Sidney," he said, and gave it to her.

Her face changed as she read, and it was evident that she was greatly discomposed.

"Do not be alarmed for him," said Stephen, quickly. "He is fast getting all right again, and you will soon be able to see him. In the meanwhile, you must consider yourself in my charge. Let me see after your baggage."

He got it through the Customs for her with Yankee promptitude, and after giving her some luncheon, bore her off to the depot and "on board" the outgoing train.

Sidney was sitting in an arm chair, wrapped up with rugs, when they reached Buffalo, and Stephen went round to tell him of her safe arrival.

"It won't do to bring her here yet," he said, "for fear of any infection—we don't want two

invalids on our hands at once, you know, my boy. I have taken her round to the house—your aunt is fixing her up for the present—and she will join you as soon as the doctor thinks it is quite safe.”

“Is—is she anxious to see me?” said Sidney, mopping his brow.

“Very,” rejoined Stephen, cheerily; “she says she must see you at the earliest moment possible. Now I must go back.”

Sidney wiped his face again when he was alone, and upbraided the malignant fate that amused itself by creating complications.

A later post brought him a note from her which did not go far towards soothing him. She told him that he had behaved very badly, and she declined to lend herself to “so odious a deception.” She said she was averse to trusting her pen to express her feelings on the subject, but she would speak to him very fully when they met. Also she signed herself, “Yours sincerely, Stella Cunninghame.”

With the prospect of exposure at any minute before him, at the best a week to wait before he could hope to overcome her scruples, Sidney Caffyn's frame of mind was not enviable.

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Stephen, on the other hand, was in the best of humours. Whenever he called he told Sidney his sister was a most charming girl, and they were extremely glad they had had her out. He said her future might be considered provided for, since she was certain to marry well. In fact, he added, his brother's wife had already a *parti* in her eye. Sidney had to express pleasure at this good news.

The interview, when Stella was permitted to come, was a very unpleasant one. The girl exclaimed that she felt an impostor—as indeed she was—and commanded him to confess the truth without delay. He promised her to think it over, and, since she had taken so unexpected an attitude, was, on the whole, contented when Stephen informed him that they wanted to keep her “up at the house” for several weeks more. Stephen, anomalously, seemed less jubilant—in fact, Sidney began to think he had a secret worry.

When the invalid returned to business he discovered his uncle had developed a dreamy and unhappy air that sat oddly on him. Stella, again, had never been in gayer spirits than when Sidney paid a visit to his relations one evening. Stephen

was unhappy, and Stella was radiant, and Sidney was on the horns of a dilemma. Then the crisis restored the balance.

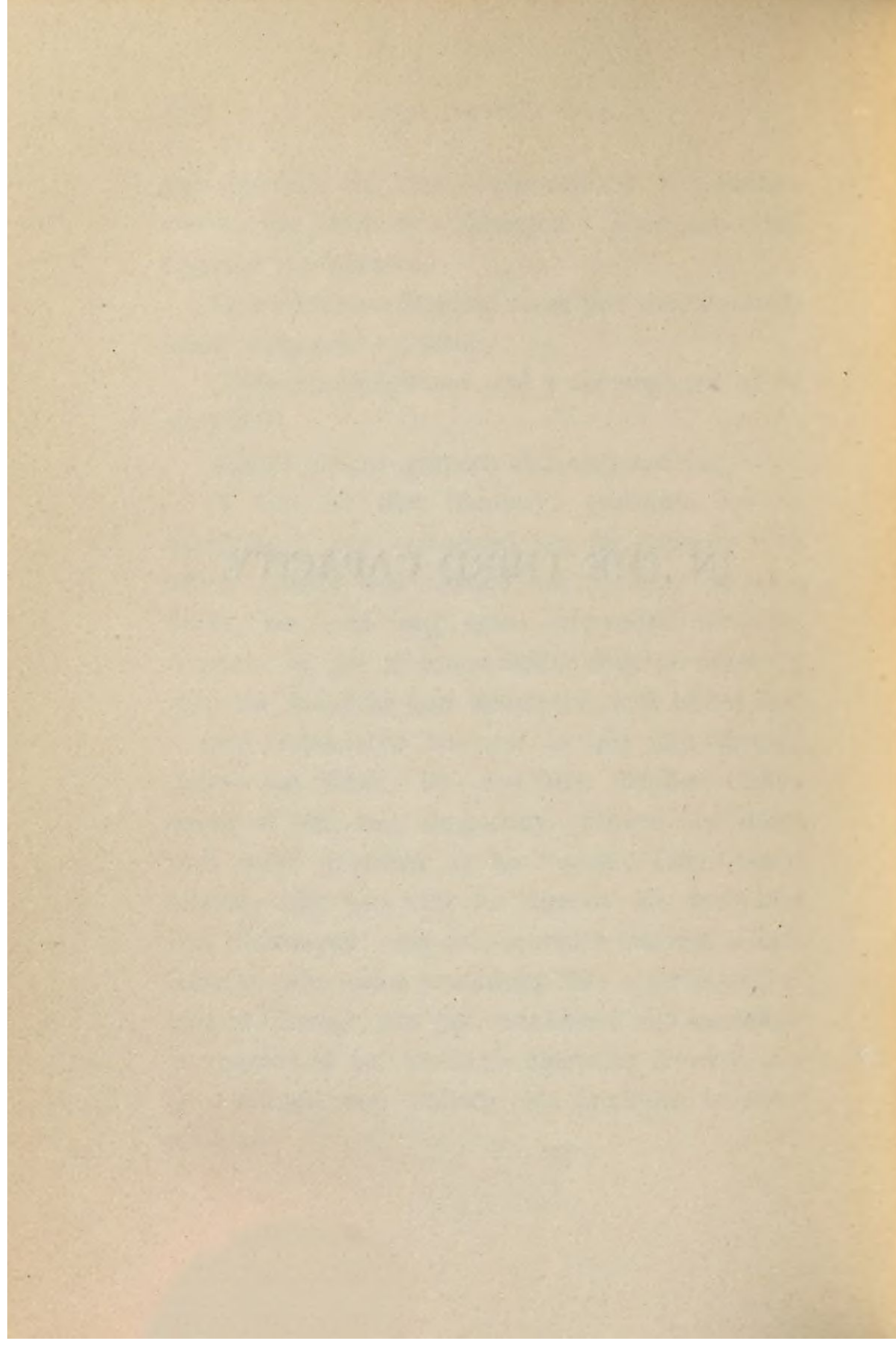
One afternoon Stephen came into the counting-house, and said to Sidney:

"Miss Cunninghame and I are engaged to be married."

Sidney simply gasped, and said nothing.

It may be that Stephen's gratitude for so charming a wife accounted for the leniency with which Sidney was treated, or it may be that Stella, for auld lang syne, interceded for him. Anyhow, he got off much better than he deserved after the fraud he had attempted, and to-day has a very respectable business in oils and foreign cheese out West. Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Caffyn speak of him very frequently—indeed, he dines with them as often as he "comes East"—and Marion, who was sent for directly his deception was discovered, and subsequently married a millionaire, who owns something like a street-and-a-half in Chicago, has just as exalted and mistaken an opinion of her brother's character as ever. So as it turned out, nobody has anything to complain of.

IN THE THIRD CAPACITY.



IN THE THIRD CAPACITY.

WHEN Gerald Singleton was in Rome worshipping Art, although in the fitness of things he should have been in the Temple studying jurisprudence, and otherwise qualifying himself for a legal career, he received a shock. He was only twenty-seven, so he took it easily—in fact, he took most matters in life easily, excepting pictures, and Greek marbles, and other things with which he ought to have had nothing to do; but to hear that Mr. Justice Singleton, whose only child he was, had suddenly taken it into his head to marry again was sufficiently startling for all that.

He was with a friend, whose acquaintance he had made in Paris, when he got the news. They had just had breakfast, and were puffing the matutinal cigarette.

"That's a dreadful bore," said the friend, who was a young painter, with "views," and visions of the time when he should "make a school," and who wore his hair long prematurely. "That's a dreadful bore, Singleton: I suppose you will have to go back for the wedding?"

"I suppose I shall," said Singleton; "it seems due to one's father to attend his wedding when one can,—I'll start to-morrow! Pratelli promised to show me that thing he is doing if I went round to his *atelier* at 1. Let's stroll on."

Pratelli's "thing" was so interesting, and the discussion that followed proved so engrossing, that it was not until evening that the letter in Gerald's pocket-book was remembered. When he re-read it he observed by the date that it had been on his trail for nearly three weeks, and that the wedding must be over.

"I shan't be able to be my father's best man after all," he remarked: "what a bother!—or wouldn't one's father make one his best man? I don't know. I'll run over to England to congratulate him, anyhow, and give my new mamma my blessing—and we'll meet in Paris next month."

He packed his impedimenta, and made his

adieux accordingly. But *l'homme propose, et la femme dispose*, as he always said in looking back, and he was not destined to sip *mazagrins* on the Boulevards again so soon as he thought.

It was a drizzling January afternoon when he reached the Twickenham house; and, springing from the cab, he hurried up the steps. He had neglected to wire that he was arriving, and there had been no one at the station to meet him.

When the servant opened the door, he hastened without inquiry into the drawing-room. The lamps had not been brought in yet, and at first the firelight did not reveal to him that it was occupied: just for a moment.

A woman was standing before the window, looking out upon the lawn and dripping trees. His father was not present.

It was a long room, and his entrance, if unceremonious, had been quiet; she did not hear him till he spoke, the woman who stood with her hands behind her, looking out at the dreary view. Gerald paused an instant in perplexity, and wished that she would turn.

"I beg your pardon," he said: "I—er—I thought my father was here."

“Oh!” she exclaimed, and moved forward with extended hand.

It was most astonishing—she could scarcely have been twenty. Not twenty, and as pretty as she was young! The man who had come down to “congratulate his mamma” gazed in bewilderment.

“Do sit down,” she said, “and I’ll ring for lights, and a brandy-and-soda, or whatever else you want. It’s odd for me to welcome you, isn’t it? I’m glad I wasn’t out.”

“Er—thank you,” said Gerald, gulping. “Er—I’ll have tea if you don’t mind.”

“Tea!” she echoed. Only that this could not be, he would have thought she said it with contempt.

“I—I am very delighted to meet you,” he went on. He had been prepared with a filial salute, but withheld it. “My father is well, I hope?”

“Oh yes,” she answered, “he’ll be sorry he was not at home. We expected you in time for the ceremony, you know. Webber, let us have tea at once, please, and—— won’t you have

anything laid for you in the dining-room?—No?—and bring in the cigars and cigarettes.”

The lamp rays showed her even prettier than he had imagined,—a face with a laughing mouth, and eyes that had a suspicion of mischief in them; the complexion of a baby, and the close-cropped curls of a boy. Gerald was fond of his father, but he could not help remembering that he was one of Her Majesty’s Judges, and had the gout.

“And what have you been doing?” she asked. “Had a good time?”

“I’ve seen a great many beautiful things,” he said—“a great many wonderful things. One must go abroad to understand what Art really means. In Paris, for instance, the very atmosphere is artistic—I dare say you have noticed it. Here, in London I mean, Art is dead, and we have only its legacies.”

“What are the horses like over there?” she inquired: “they don’t compare with ours on the whole, do they?”

“I can hardly pretend to be a judge of horse-flesh,” said Gerald, rather confused; “your own tastes, perhaps——?”

"Oh, I *like* horses, and dogs too," she replied. "I love them! Your father has given me a ripper—a lady's horse, you know, but she's got mettle. You should just see her gallop! I'll take you out to the stable before breakfast in the morning, if you're good."

"That—that's very kind of you," he said, shivering. "I hope you'll always find me very 'good'—I intend to be. By the way, I haven't the least idea what I am to call you; I confess you have rather taken me by surprise. It would be too funny to call you 'mother,' wouldn't it?"

She stared at the idea, and then laughed merrily.

"Yes," she said,—“people might quiz us! Better call me 'Kate,' I suppose, and be done with it."

Gerald smiled also, but awkwardly.

"There doesn't seem much alternative, it's a fact!" he said. "Well, if you don't mind, I'll call you 'Kate.'"

"I hope you'll call me 'nice' too," she returned, with amusement. "Your father was in an awful funk that you might consider me too young. Do you?"

"I am sure you must know I think you per-

fectly charming," said Gerald—"most charming—er—er—and delightful."

"You think me a 'duck,' in other words, and that's all about it," she exclaimed, with another peal of laughter. "And you think your father a very lucky man. Oh, my dear Gerald, what a delicious stepson you are!"

The young man turned red and pulled his moustache. She was certainly unconventional, this new wife his father had found.

"Where is my father?" he inquired. "When will he be in?"

"He's had to go away on some business or other," she explained, with surprise. "He won't be 'in,' as you term it, for a fortnight. I thought you knew!"

"Oh," he said blankly, "you don't say so! I'm afraid I shall be in the way."

"Not a bit," she declared. "This is your home, you know, and you must make yourself comfortable till he returns. If you don't, he will blame *me*. Indeed," she went on more seriously, "I trust you will always assist me to do my duty by you, my dear boy, and, if I fail in any way, that you won't think it is from any indifference."

I feel my responsibility towards you very acutely, I assure you, and am more than anxious to be everything to you that I ought. Now go and dress for dinner," she added. "I am curious to see you in evening clothes."

"You are—'curious'?" he repeated.

"So much depends on a young man's appearance in evening clothes," she said gently; "I really cannot judge of you, or of what you may do in the future, till I have seen you in them."

Gerald went upstairs, and read his father's letter to him for the third time, and questioned dumbly whether anybody concerned in the matter was a lunatic. He felt inclined to pinch himself, to ascertain if he were awake.

There was nothing in the parental epistle to suggest insanity. It was brief and to the point:—

•
"MY DEAR GERALD,

"I want you to suspend your interminable Art pottering for a few days, and come over to assist at my wedding. Yes, my boy, I am going to marry again. I have not chosen a lady of my own age, so she'll be agile enough to dodge the pillows when the infernal gout is bad. Jestings apart, I am sure you will like her, and get on with her; in fact, she will make the house a great deal brighter for you in every way. The ceremony is fixed for a fortnight hence, so hurry up.

"Your very affectionate FATHER."

“Good Lord!” murmured Gerald, and then again, “*Good* Lord!”

He dressed himself in a kind of stupor, and on descending the stairs found his stepmother was already in the dining-room, with Webber in attendance.

“I hope I haven’t kept you waiting?” he asked.

“Not at all,” she said, and began dispensing the soup.

The matronly tone she had adopted at the conclusion of their interview had now given place to her earlier one, and this continued until the sweets had been removed, and they sat *tête-à-tête* discussing dessert. Then she gave a little approving nod:

“Admirable!” she said; “you look admirable, Gerald—you may go far!”

He realised that she was taking a motherly interest in him again, and referring to his appearance.

“You may peel me a pear,” she said; “or, stay, you want one thing more—I must give you a ‘buttonhole.’”

She selected a rosebud with great deliberation, and fastened it in his coat.

"You should have an elastic there," she commented gravely: "a loop is indispensable; all the best tailors use them. Conceive now a flower accorded to you as a *gage d'amour*—a young girl yielding you one from her bouquet—could anything be more clumsy, more terrible, than to have to ask her for a pin! See that you always have an elastic loop in future, Gerald: it is necessary."

"I will," he promised. "Anything else?"

"No," she said; "no—unless it is your tie. I see you have on the 'butterfly bow'; its day is done. It is always desirable for a young man to be in the fashion, unless he revives a whim belonging distinctly to a past age. My uncle Marmaduke, for instance, now wears the shape of hat affected in the early 'sixties'; but very few men have the personal magnetism to dare so much as that—very few. Your bow, if I may say so, is at once too modern and too old. You are not offended?"

"I am greatly indebted to you, on the contrary," he said. "I am certain there must be still another fault. Do let me feel that you have really an interest in me."

She patted him on the arm.

"So far from there being any other fault, I prophesy great things for you. And now, instead of lecturing you any more, I will have some coffee and benedictine, and you may smoke."

"Thank you," said Gerald. "You are certain you don't mind?"

"Mind! I will keep you in countenance!" She lapsed all at once into her gayer tone. "I shan't shock you, I know. I was always allowed to have just one in private, and your father permits me now. Got a light?"

She popped a cigarette between her lovely lips, and blew a ring of smoke daintily into the air. Gerald began to find these sudden transitions startling.

"What do you say to 'a hundred up'?" she inquired. "I'll play you level for half a crown. Or would you rather have some music in the drawing-room?"

"Well," he said, "I'd prefer the music just now, if you'll be so kind; it's rather too soon after dinner for billiards."

"I'll give you points, *of course*, if you're doubtful of yourself," she said quickly. "But between

strangers, don't you know, I always think a level game's the fairest."

"I play billiards pretty well," said Gerald, "thanks; but I'm fond of music, and if it's all the same to you——"

"Music be it!" she responded promptly. "Finish your curaçoa, my dear young friend, and come on."

When she took her seat at the piano she asked him what his favourite songs were, and lifted her eyebrows at his answer.

"Oh! I'll sing you something better than those," she said. "Listen!"

She dashed into a cadenza, and then, with a flash of her eyes across her shoulder at him, burst into "Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road."

"Can't you join in the chorus?" she said. "Oh, you are a duffer! Have you heard Chevalier do it?"

Forsaking the music-stool, she sprang to her feet, and, continuing the verse without an accompaniment, favoured him with an impromptu imitation:—

"Laughed—there, I thought I should ha' died—
Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road!"

Her voice filled the room; her attitude was indescribably funny. There was something so infectious in her gaiety that he did join in the chorus, and they gave it out together till she threw herself exhausted in a chair. When Gerald Singleton retired that night he looked at the walls in stupefaction, and asked, with Bill Nye, "Can these things be?" and the walls returned no answer; and he put the question next day to the heavens, and the heavens were silent also; so that he abandoned the interrogatory at last, and remarked, with Dundreary, that it was one of those puzzles "no fellah could understand." Mrs. Singleton, on the other hand, appeared disturbed with no misgivings about her conduct whatever, and treated him in one moment as if she were a man, and the next as if she were a hundred years old, with unimpaired serenity.

"You ought to marry," she said to him one afternoon, as she sat in a big armchair cracking filberts,—“you ought to marry, Gerald. You have everything in your favour; a nice girl with money might be found for you easily enough.”

"Marry!" he echoed; "the notion has never entered my head."

"You should think of it, then," she persisted; "we must see what we can do for you. I hope—I do hope—you have no ridiculous ideas on the subject, no romantic tendencies, I mean, to stand in your way?"

"I have no tendencies at all," he replied, a shade irritably. Her worldly wisdom sat oddly on her. "But I shouldn't marry a girl I didn't care for, if she had the wealth of the Indies."

"Then you *have* tendencies?" she exclaimed. "How trying of you! Of course you are very young still; but I imagined you were too sensible for any folly of that kind: I thought you were more practical. My dear boy, you really *ought* to marry money: I have been thinking the matter over very seriously; I do not see what else you can do. You find absolutely no attraction in the Bar, I understand, and Art with you is much less a profession than an amusement. Naturally you will always be independent to a certain extent; but every young man ought to do something for himself in this world. If he can't earn money, he ought to marry it." She jumped up, and shook a lapful of shells into the fender. "You disappoint me, Gerald—you do indeed. What on

earth is the difference whether a girl's pretty or not? A pretty face won't give you a good house, my child, nor a park hack, nor a hunter. Look out for a wife with something solid in the way of settlements and expectations—that's the advice of your mother to you. And now ring the bell for me, please: the cook is sending me the treacle and brown sugar into the library, and I'm going to make some toffee."

"You are going——? I beg your pardon," gasped Gerald.

"I am going to make toffee—toffee—toffee! Did you never hear of it? Come and see how it's done."

He followed her obediently. He no longer attempted to understand her—he now set down the attempt as waste of time—but in her range of mood, which covered a century or so, there was a fascination he was unable to resist. He even began to pardon Mr. Justice Singleton himself. She was intoxicating. Whether she were sixteen or sixty, whether she admonished him like his grandmother, or crouched on the hearthrug and scorched her cheeks, stirring treacle in a

saucepan on an Abbotsford stove, his stepmother was adorable.

Now, it is entirely to be desired that, if a young man's father marry again, his son shall approve the object of his choice; but if the filial criticism go the length of deeming the lady "adorable," that is *not* to be desired, and threatens, moreover, rocks ahead for the young man's peace of mind. There are certain things we are chary of admitting plainly to ourselves, and Gerald was no more candid than the majority in his reveries; but vaguely, and without putting it into words, he became conscious by degrees that he was thinking of his stepmother far more often and more admiringly than he, she or his father need require. For a day or two after this occurred to him he said "Nonsense" and "Pooh, pooh"; but a day or two of the undivided society of a girl by whom we are already attracted produces enormous developments, so presently he no longer said "Pooh," and instead blew clouds of meditative "Honey-dew" with drawn brows, and debated how best he could get away.

At this stage, while he was moodily considering what excuse he could offer, an alteration was

to be observed in the attitude of Mrs. Singleton. She neither favoured him with her ludicrous assumption of maternity now, nor behaved like a schoolgirl. It was hard to realise, but she even appeared to be *bashful*. Also she avoided him. Once when he called her "Kate" she changed colour. A week ago he would have sought an explanation; to-day he refrained—a lack of curiosity from which conclusions may be drawn. The fortnight for which Mr. Justice Singleton was absent had nearly expired, and the fact made Gerald's duty more difficult. Having waited for his return so long, it looked odd to depart just as he was expected. Nevertheless, the duty was plain, though the path might have its awkwardness; and one morning he descended to the breakfast-room resolved to announce his intention and to act upon it.

She was seated at the table, reading a letter that had come for her. He ignored his own, perceiving that she looked pale and disturbed.

"Not bad news, I trust?" he asked.

"No," she said nervously—"no; it is nothing."

She lapsed into reverie, and then blushed vividly as their eyes met.

"Coffee?" she asked.

"Thank you,—yes."

He stirred his cup slowly, and wished Webber out of the room. When they were left alone, however, he still found nothing to say. There was a long silence, which they broke together.

"Gerald——"

"Kate——"

"I beg your pardon," he said. "Please go on."

"It was—— After you."

"I—what I was going to say," he murmured, "is that I find I must go to town for a few days. It is important."

"At once?" she said.

"Yes, immediately. I hardly know when I shall be back."

He wondered if this were enough, or whether he should proceed to assure her that he should no longer make the house his home. Her next inquiry settled the point.

"You will return in time to receive your father?"

"I shall run down as soon as I hear he has arrived—for the day."

There was another pause. She played restlessly with the flowers in her dress, and twice it seemed as if she were about to speak, yet did not.

"*I* had something I wished to say to *you*," she faltered at length. "I hardly know how, yet I want to do it."

"There is nothing I can refuse you, you may be sure," he answered quickly. "If you——"

"It isn't that," she said; "it is that I am—*ashamed*."

Her face had grown as pale as the lilies that she wore, and her breath came and went unevenly. He leant back watching her with his heart in his throat, paralysed with fear of what her extraordinary nature might prompt her to declare.

"It is," she said, with a rush—"it is a confession!"

"There is—— Say nothing!" he exclaimed. "Kate—Mrs. Singleton—don't give me any confidence you may regret, I beg you."

"Oh!" she gasped—"oh!" And then, almost before he understood that she was crying, she covered her face with her hands and ran out of the room.

He sprang up from his chair, and began to pace the floor excitedly. The world was spinning round him. He knew he loved her: he still felt the sob that she had uttered in his own throat. He was conscious that she was coming back to him, and realised that it was impossible for him to leave the house without seeing her again. The servant's steps sounded on the hall, approaching to clear the table. He hurriedly resumed his seat, and on the man's entrance motioned him away. His eyes fell on the unopened letters beside his plate as he did so, and, staring at them, became aware that the top one was from his father.

Abstractedly he opened and commenced to read it. It was dated from Algiers, and reproached him for not returning for the marriage ceremony. He read it through, barely taking in its sense. There was a postscript, and in this a sentence suddenly leaped out from the paper and struck him on the brain. It was:

"If you get back before ourselves, you needn't be afraid of being dull. I don't know if I mentioned it when I wrote before: the young widow I have married has a daughter, who will, of course, make her home with us. She is a desperate tomboy, but good fun."

She was in the drawing-room, and he discovered her.

"May I ask if your letter this morning was from Algiers?" he inquired.

"Yes," she said, starting; "it was."

"And told you that my father would be back very soon, I suspect?"

"To-morrow," she faltered.

"Which was the reason your guilty terror urged you to confess! My father is absent on his honeymoon, and you, I have learnt, are an impostor!"

He towered above her like the monument of Justice, and she cowered.

"Are you very angry?" she asked.

"I am more than angry," he explained sternly. "I am indignant! Do you know that you have made me the biggest fool in the county, Miss Kate?"

"You 'fooled' yourself to begin with," she returned defiantly, whisking a tear away. "Taking me for your mother—such nonsense!"

"Are you glad you're not my mother?"

She nodded. "I found you a great trouble," she said.

"As my sister you may like me better," he suggested.

"You are being horrid to me, and I don't like you anyhow."

"Not as a brother?"

She shook her head.

"Nor as a son?"

"I tell you I don't like you any way," she answered. "Let me go."

He slid an arm round her waist, and held her fast.

"Kate," he said, "you've tried me in two capacities, and found me wanting in both. Will you—won't you, if I am very nice to you—one day try me in a third?"

"If you are *awfully* nice, and *always* have a loop for your buttonhole," said Kate,—*"there's luck in odd numbers—perhaps one day."*

And, meeting with no resistance, it was in the third capacity he kissed her.

THE END.

Opinions of the Press.

“As in a Looking Glass”, by F. C. Philips.

“To Mr. Philips may be said to belong, therefore, the credit of paying back the first instalment of the debt which the English stage has so long owed to the French. The drama of passion does not yet rank as an English product, but in ‘As in a Looking Glass’ and his kindred stories Mr. Philips has handled with conspicuous success a subject which French writers have almost made their own. Having won his position as an English novelist, he has achieved the unprecedented distinction of furnishing the leading French actress of the day with the materials for one of her characteristic triumphs.”—*The Times*.

“Clever beyond any common standard of cleverness.”—*Daily Telegraph*.

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“That Mr. Philips’ story has hit the public taste is sufficiently evident from the fact that it has reached a second edition before we have found time to notice it. Its success is not astonishing; for it shows abundant cleverness, much knowledge of some curious phases of life, and a real insight into certain portions of that mysterious organ, the female heart.”—*St. James’s Gazette*.

“Unless Pope was a terrible libeller, which perhaps he was, every woman is at heart a rake. Mr. Philips does not prove the truth of his motto in the cunningly devised fable which bears the appropriate title ‘As in a Looking Glass’; but he certainly draws the reflection of an accomplished rake who is at the same time a very woman Mr. Philips’ story is a work of art, and, being much superior to the rough sketches of an average novelist, it discharges the true function of every work of art by representing things as they actually are, and teaching the observer to discriminate between appearances and realities.”—*Saturday Review*.

“A Daughter’s Sacrifice”, by F. C. Philips and Percy Fendall.

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“Social Vicissitudes”, by F. C. Philips.

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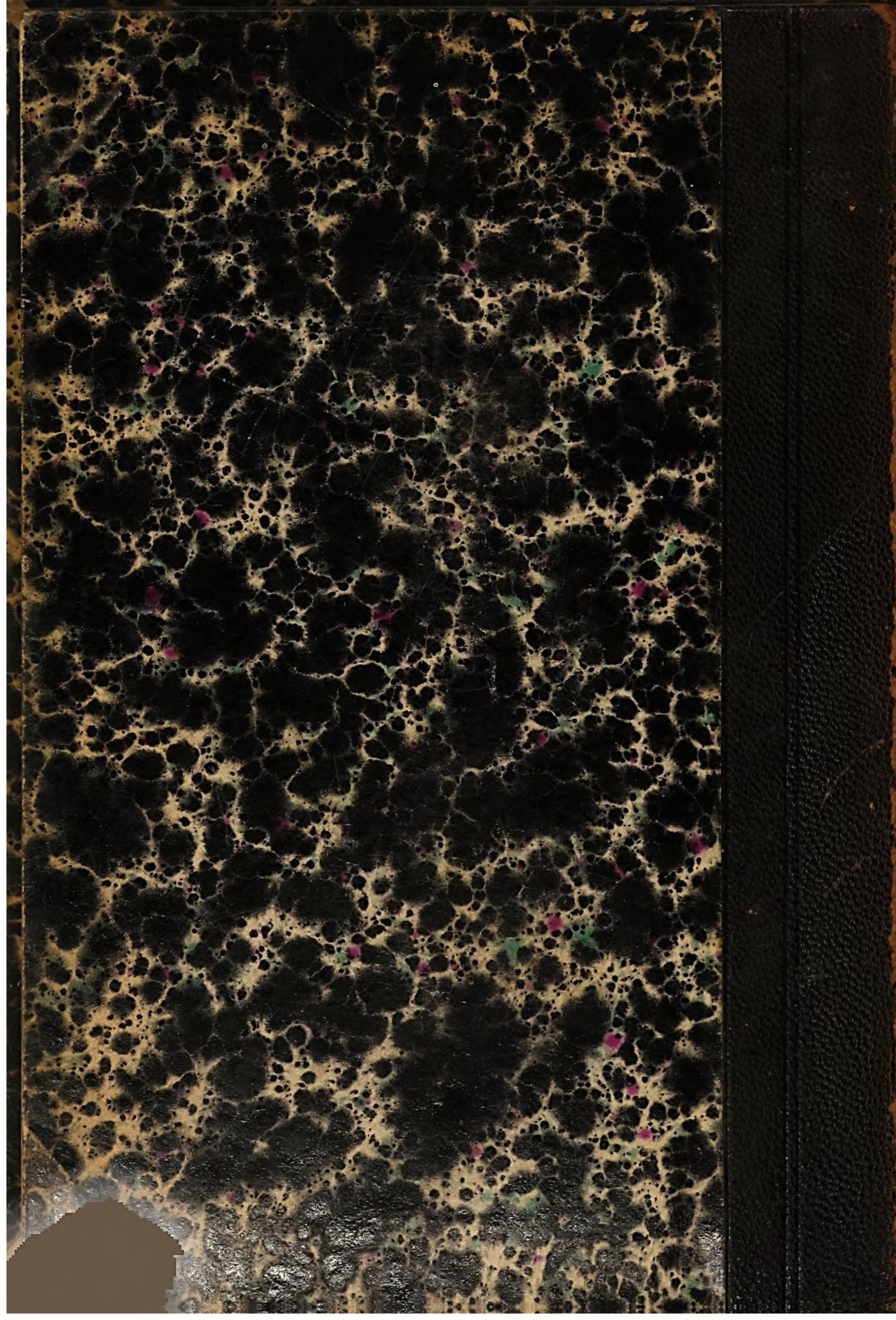
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Philips, F. C.

My little husband

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